

December 22, 1945

AMERICA



And suddenly there
was with the Angel a
multitude of the heaven-
ly army, praising God
and saying: *Glory*

*"Glory to God in the highest; and
on earth Peace to men of good will."*

VOLUME LXXIV NUMBER XII

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COMMENT ON THE WEEK

Trent and Christian Unity. The meager published reports of Pius XII's letter on the centenary of the Council of Trent reveal little of its content. But three of his favorite thoughts seem to emerge. First, he speaks again of his concern over the loss the world suffers, even in the this-worldly aspects of its life, by reason of our tragic religious divisions. They render exceedingly difficult that united religious action without which our hopes of a new order are perilously slim. Second, he indicates again the value he sets on the continued possession, by many of our separated brethren, of faith in God as He really is—a Trinity of Persons, the Second of whom became man for our salvation. This ancient faith, clamoring for its own completion, is the true ground from which all hopes of Christian unity must spring. Third, our Holy Father reiterates his confidence in intelligence and scholarship, illuminated by good will and freedom from prejudice, as means of hastening the day of Christian unity. Not mutual recriminations, but a patient work of study done, so far as possible, in common, and done, too, in a pacific atmosphere—this is the path to understanding and reunion. It is a long path, and along it many broken bridges must be constructed. But doubtless because of his confidence in this type of intellectual work, Pius XII recently approved the association of scholars, "Unitas," dedicated to such a joint labor.

Christian Democrats Non-Denominational.

New evidence is at hand of the rapidly growing significance of the Christian Democratic movement in Europe. The appointments of Herr Figl, Christian Democrat, as Chancellor of Austria, and Alcide de Gasperi as Prime Minister of Italy have advanced the Party's international front. In Germany Dr. von Hallen, President of the Christian Democrat Party for Rhineland and Westphalia, recently declared, according to CIP, that July 17, 1945, the day on which the Christian Democrat Party was founded at Cologne, would remain an important date in political history. Premier de Gasperi's conversations with Georges Bidault and later with President de Gaulle had built up a friendly understanding between the Italian Christian Democrats and the French MRP. To estimate the full significance of Christian democracy there should be emphasized the thoroughly non-denominational character of the movement. As Dr. von Hallen stated on the occasion referred to,

Catholic and Protestant Christians meet in the Christian Democrat party, without mutual distrust, for common action in the political sphere. In the fight for a better future, Christians should form a large united front. He added that in essential matters there are no differences between the new Centre Party and the Christian Democratic Party; although they have not yet been able to adjust their relations.

Victory Loan. Despite the fact that the Victory Loan exceeded the goal of \$11 billions, the Treasury's final effort at war financing must be written off with only small praise. The Government hoped to ease some of the pressure on price ceilings by mopping up idle cash in the hands of consumers; to this end the E-bond goal was set at \$2 billions. By December 7, when the Treasury announced that the Victory Loan was over the top, sales of E-bonds had reached a scant \$1,165,000,000, only about 58 per cent of the objective.

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Whopping purchases by corporations, amounting to \$8,076,000,000, and individual purchases of other bonds than the anti-inflationary E type, gave the drive a misleading appearance of success. In view of the prodigal Christmas spending, which exceeded the record-breaking totals of last year, it is obvious that many people still do not appreciate the dangerous possibilities of uncontrolled inflation. The Treasury's \$2 billion goal for E-bonds was not beyond the country's reach; too many citizens simply failed to understand the necessity of restricting their expenditures and lending their excess dollars to the Government. Since the books on the Victory Loan will not be closed until December 31, there is still a chance that the E-bond goal will be reached. If you have not as yet done your share, this is your last chance to finish a job well worth doing.

Housing Shortage. The President's announcement that priorities on building materials and ceilings on housing are again necessary is an encouraging sign that an early solution of our national housing shortage will be forthcoming. Washington is definitely becoming worried at the continued diversion of builders' efforts and short-stocked materials away from the low- and middle-income groups who lack decent housing to the high-income homes and industrial, commercial and recreational projects. The President's action is a partial and temporary solution that can only last for the "wartime" emergency. Yet the housing shortage—accentuated now by the plight of returning veterans—has been permanent and cumulative. Stressing the profit motive, builders have long neglected the middle-income group (approximately \$1,500 to \$2,500) which comprises some nine million families and will probably comprise eleven-and-one-half million families within ten years. Unable to pay more than \$3,000 to \$5,000 for a home, and unprovided for by public housing, they find themselves in the "no-man's-land" of the building trade. Investment funds and reasonably priced materials are also lacking for low-cost housing projects. Hence slum clearance proceeds at a snail's pace while unessential building that promises higher returns goes forward. Broader loan-insurance and a coordination of efforts and agencies under a single administration seem called for. Meanwhile, veterans and the American Association of University Women are protesting the \$10,000 priorities ceiling.

Protecting the Migrants. Grave concern about the plight of the migrants is manifest in a statement released on December 13 by representatives

of Protestant, Catholic and Jewish religious organizations. The treatment of imported workers (AMERICA, October 27, p. 98) was the immediate occasion of this joint statement on "the spiritual and material welfare of migratory workers engaged in commercial agriculture." Yet the plight of migrants generally, so vividly portrayed in *Grapes of Wrath*, has not materially improved to the point where we can forget that they are "the most depressed labor group in the United States." The statement calls attention to the lack of decent housing, the very low wage scales, the inadequate health and educational care, the discrimination and the violation of contracts which have added to the misery of the migrants. Also emphasized is the fact that agricultural workers do not have protection for minimum wages, workmen's compensation, old-age and survivors insurance and unemployment compensation. It is the virtual peonage conditions under which these groups are forced to work that explains many of our agricultural labor difficulties, as became quite clear during the war when other work was readily available. In fairness, however, to the more progressive commercial growers it is noted that in some sections conditions are improving and the relationship of labor problems to workers' welfare is at last being recognized. Widespread interest of religious groups will go far toward creating a strong public opinion. This is needed to remove obstacles and overcome resistance of special interests which have perpetuated the system.

Working Parties for Industry. Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, has made it clear that the British Labor Government expects efficiency and high production from the many large industries which are not subject to nationalization. Conferences or councils for each industry are to assist in achieving the desired results. At these conferences a new element is represented—the consuming, stockholding public. On the twelve-man "working parties," as they are called, are four representatives of the public, in addition to four each from management and labor. Says Sir Stafford, explaining the plan:

The Government must, in one way or another, get the best advice it can on what these steps [for increased efficiency and high production] should be. Three conditions are essential:

First, advice must come from the industry itself, because that is where the past experience resides;

Secondly, employers and workers should be equally represented because both sides not only have a contribution to make but also will have to carry out any plans that may be decided upon;

Thirdly, the public and Parliament must be satisfied—whatever the recommendations may be—that they

are truly in the national interest and that the two sides of industry have not "ganged up" against the consumer for their advantage.

Evidently the English have learned that the public may be the victim in an employee-employer tug-of-war and therefore deserves a hearing when important decisions are made. Significant, too, is the implication that production plans and costs and profits are not the exclusive concern of management in those large industries intimately affecting public welfare and national prosperity.

Power on the Land. Big obstacles to decentralized rural living and especially to farm life are the absence of adequate electric power and the high cost of installation on an individual basis. Cooperatives financed by Rural Electrification Administration are providing the answer in those areas by-passed by power utilities because power-line installation is costly and unprofitable. The power co-ops have gone far in eleven years toward electrifying rural America and bringing to non-urban citizens the benefits of technical progress. While private companies have indeed contributed toward the extension of central-station electric service, it is the enterprising REA co-ops which lead the way, especially in the sparsely settled areas. Figures showing West Coast development illustrate the achievement:

State	Farms Receiving Central Station Electric Service, June 30, 1945	
California.....	122,200	92.1 per cent
Idaho.....	34,100	78.1
Nevada.....	1,860	52.1
Oregon.....	49,400	79.9
Washington..	68,300	83.6

These figures represent an increase since December 31, 1934 (REA dates from May, 1935), as follows: California, 41,107 more farms electrified, a 50.7 per cent increase; Idaho, 20,667 farms or 153.9 per cent increase; Nevada, 914 or 96.6 per cent; Oregon, 31,561 or 176.9 per cent; Washington, 28,240 or 70.5 per cent. Lest anyone grow complacent or think REA co-ops have nothing more to do, we recall the fact that in Arkansas 80.9 per cent of farms are still without central-station service; in Kansas 72 per cent; in Louisiana 79.2 per cent; in South Dakota 88.5 per cent; in Virginia 65.5 per cent. Some of these farms have their own power plants, but the vast majority are still in the days of the oil lamp. There is need for light on the land.

Kentucky's School Bus Law. Father Paul Blakely, who was America's education editor for so many years, used to alternate between pride and chagrin for his native and beloved State of

Kentucky. Often he had reason to be proud of her acts—such acts as a recent decision of Appellate Judge E. Poe Harris on the School Bus Law. In 1944 the Kentucky legislature passed a law allowing fiscal courts to provide transportation of children to schools, whether public or private, as a safety measure. Recently a taxpayer contested the validity of the law. When Circuit Judge Adams held that the law was a violation of the Kentucky Constitution by permitting expenditure of funds "in aid of sectarian institutions and parochial schools," the Appellate Judge pronounced him in error:

It cannot be said with any reason or consistency [wrote the Appellate Judge] that tax legislation to provide our school children with safe transportation is not tax legislation for a public purpose. Neither can it be said that such legislation, or such taxation, is in aid of a church, or of a private, sectarian or parochial school, nor that it is other than what it is designed and purports to be, legislation for the health and safety of our children. The fact that in a strained and technical sense the school might derive an indirect benefit from the enactment, is not sufficient to defeat the declared purpose and the practical and wholesome effect of the law.

To this just and wise judicial decision we say a hearty Amen for Father Blakely and ourselves.

No Preference as to Crooks. A few years ago at an informal, off-the-record meeting, a labor leader was asked why the AFL and CIO did not publicly denounce the minority of union officials who run afoul of the law. "You cannot," he said, "kick a man when he is down." Perhaps this mistaken concept of fairness and sportsmanship explains similar behavior on the part of business organizations. It has not been sufficiently noted that the National Association of Manufacturers and the U. S. Chamber of Commerce are just as unwilling to censure erring businessmen as labor organizations are to rebuke their dishonest officials. A few weeks ago the Weirton Steel Company, notorious for its anti-CIO policy, was fined \$148,215 in Federal Court for illegally diverting vital war materials for the improvement of a swank country club. If any of our great business organizations publicly rebuked the Weirton management for this selfish and unpatriotic action, the censure escaped our notice. Similarly we heard no protest from either the NAM or the Chamber when firms controlling ninety per cent of artificial-limb production were recently indicted by a Federal grand jury on charges of conspiring to fix unreasonable and non-competitive prices on their badly needed products. It would help clear the atmosphere if both business and labor organizations were more courageous in denouncing the minority of chisellers and crooks in their ranks.

Argentine Immigration. With regrets for time already wasted in sterile political and ideological disputes, a strong appeal is made by an Argentine economist for a rehabilitation of that country's economic policy under the new circumstances of a profoundly transformed world. His article, entitled: "Isolation, or Justice and Progress," appears in the first issue of *Civilización*, a new quarterly published in Buenos Aires (Lavalle 1294), and edited by Manuel Río. The writer, Justiniano Allende Posse, reviews the great economic development of Argentina from a primitive agrarian outpost to one of the most highly civilized countries in the world: "super-civilized," he calls it, as is shown by the deplorable decrease of the birth rate. As a human foundation for a really progressive policy, Señor Allende Posse holds that "it is imperative to re-establish the current of immigration, watching over the quality of those who are admitted, and ensuring their suitable distribution and in particular enabling them to take root in the country's interior," and receiving them "as brothers," after the example of Christ Our Lord Himself. Along with a vigorous program favoring immigration, a wide program of vocational and technical education is proposed, as well as a friendly and generous behavior toward foreign investors. "Every policy contrary to charity," says Allende Posse, "merely stirs up disaster." There can be but one sound plan: to "seek the common good, to cooperate in the universal order."

Is the Bomb a Deterrent? The ghastly prospects of an atomic war have been adduced as reasons why the atomic age has placed war out of the question. It is unbelievable, many say, that any nation in its right senses would provoke a war. This contention is subjected to examination in a recent study issued by the Institute of International Studies of Yale University. In this memorandum on "The Atomic Bomb and American Security," the author, Dr. Bernard Brodie, examines the possible use that an aggressor might make of the threat of atomic war. "Hitler made a good many bloodless gains," recalls the author,

"by mere blackmail, in which he relied heavily on the too obvious horror of modern war." The result of a similar strategy in the atomic age may be a series of *faits accomplis* eventuating in the same final deterioration of international affairs in which war, however terrible, can no longer be avoided. Fear and anxiety, continues the memorandum, will be a powerful but wholly unpredictable factor in world affairs. It may create a neurosis culminating in the urge for a "preventive" war. War has long been "impossible," it is pointed out. But the possession of great and powerful weapons is a temptation to an aggressor by reason of the quick and cheap victory which it promises. This carefully reasoned statement of the implications of the atomic bomb for American security is a warning against assuming too readily that fear of the atomic bomb will of itself deter nations from war.

German Catholic Resistance. The current issue of *Thought* (December, 1945) prints the text of two protests lodged with the Nazi government in 1940, one by Cardinal Bertram of Breslau, the other by Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich. Both concern the barbaric Nazi practice of murdering inmates of mental hospitals, "because they are no longer of productive value to the folk community." In commenting on these two documents, Father Rudolph Arbesmann, O.S.A., says:

In order to understand the importance of these letters, it must be kept in mind that they were written at a time when the Nazis were at the height of their power, when Europe had been overrun and the outlook for western civilization was very dark indeed. In that critical hour, the German Bishops never wavered in their defense of human rights.

We do not yet know the full extent of Catholic resistance to Nazi tyranny in Germany; the record must be carefully documented, then widely publicized. These two letters contribute powerfully to this purpose, as did the recent publication by the *New York Times* of the German Bishops' letter to Pius XII, written in June, 1941. In an article in *Thought* (March, 1945), "Catholic Resistance in Germany," Prof. Friedrich Baerwald called attention to the definite attempts being made by certain groups to suppress or distort the facts. Certain groups are indeed anxious to exclude the Church from the work of German reconstruction. On its side, the Church stands on its record in demanding that the way be open to it to make its indispensable contribution. Hence the full publication of the record, as it becomes available, is an important task, both in justice to German Catholics and for the guidance of our German policy.

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WASHINGTON FRONT

It is no secret in Washington that the Nuremberg trials are causing some uneasiness in judicial and legal, not to say political, circles. The trouble seems to be that some fear that we are trying the Nazi bigwigs on ex-post-facto charges, that we are setting up retroactive laws.

It is admitted that Justice Jackson's first report to the President was a great state paper, and that his opening charge was masterly. But, where, it is being asked, are the statute laws according to which the death penalty is being demanded? Who passed them? Germany? The United Nations, which is not yet in operation? They are not in international law.

The horrifying suggestion is being made that it would have been better if we had just shot Goering & Co. out of hand and been done with it.

People are also contrasting what they term the lack of law on which the court is based with the evident effort to give the defendants a fair trial according to Anglo-Saxon forms of law. But there again, can anyone doubt that the outcome of the trial will be death for at least the principal defendants? Are they not judged in advance? If they are, why try them?

All of this evidences a lamentable confusion in modern jurisprudence, a confusion, however, inherent in the whole of modern political theory. It is that a criminal is to be judged only according to specific national written law.

If this is the only law on which we can try the Nazi leaders, then we might just as well have left them to the mercy of the military or to the vengeance of their victims.

The fact is, however, that there is another law in the Western tradition which we have too long neglected to our misfortune. It was called the *Jus Gentium*. "Law of Nations" is not a fair translation of those words, since James Brown Scott gave the phrase the meaning of international law. What Isidore of Seville, in the seventh century, and his successors to the sixteenth century, meant by the phrase was something entirely different.

Justice Jackson was really appealing to the *Jus Gentium* when he held that there are certain crimes (plotting unjust aggression, etc.) which all nations hold punishable. Unfortunately, he did not have *Jus Gentium* to appeal to. His predecessors in the seventh to the sixteenth centuries would have had, on unimpeachable moral and legal grounds. It would be a great gain if the Nuremberg trial were to result in the resurrection of the old concept of *Jus Gentium*.

WILFRID PARSONS

UNDERSCORINGS

Pending final determination of a policy on religious education by the freely expressed wishes of the German people themselves, the Allied Religious Affairs Committee has ruled that "no school drawing on public funds is to refuse to children the possibility of receiving religious instruction, and no school drawing on public funds is to make it compulsory for a child to attend classes for religious instruction." Previously adopted measures, which threatened interference with parochial schools, have thus been rescinded.

► The first National Marian Congress, concluded on December 8 at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on the grounds of the Catholic University, coincided with the centenary of the dedication of our country by the Catholic Bishops to the Blessed Virgin under the title of her Immaculate Conception. Addresses by leaders of six national organizations that foster special devotion to Mary were a feature of the Congress.

► From the beginning of the war to the end of August, 1945, Catholic Army Chaplains conducted five and a half million services, attended by more than 329 million service personnel. They administered the Sacraments on 3,426,003 occasions to 42,501,315 people, and they held 1,199,822 services for civilian communities, at which 95,583,818 people were in attendance.

► Under the new divorce decree of the Polish Provisional Government, divorce may be obtained automatically upon both parties requesting it. Despite protests by the Polish Hierarchy, the decree is effective for three years beginning Jan. 1.

► At Creighton University's Founders' Day dinner, Archbishop James H. Ryan, the new Episcopal Chairman of the NCWC Education Department, suggested an examination of conscience by colleges and universities to find out whether they are fulfilling the four aims of education: to teach men to think effectively; to enable them to communicate their thoughts properly; to give them facility to make relevant judgments, based on facts; to teach them to discriminate among values.

► The National Coordination Office of Catholic Social Action in Colombia has made remarkable progress in its two years of existence. In the first year it sponsored twelve social weeks for clergy and eighty public lectures; it conducted four courses for social-action directors; it started publication of a monthly bulletin and promoted the weekly *Justicia Social*, which now has a circulation of 30,000. Units of Catholic Social Action have been established in nine archdioceses and dioceses of Colombia.

A. P. F.

The Edict of Caesar

A. J. PILIÉ

"At that time there went forth a decree from Caesar Augustus that a census of the whole world should be taken."

In these words Saint Luke opens his narrative of the events heralding the birth of Our Lord.

The "whole world," of course, was the Roman Empire—the *orbis terrarum* of the ancients, that great chain of lands circling the Mediterranean. In size Augustus' empire—if one were to impose it, with its inland sea, upon a map of the Western Hemisphere—approximated pretty closely the expanse of our own United States. And tucked away in the eastern corner of that vast domain was the vassal kingdom of Palestine, an "ally" of Rome.

Your haughty Roman patrician knew little of Palestine, except that it was the homeland of the wealthy Jew who had lent him the funds necessary to improve his villa on Capri. But the hoary veteran of the eastern campaigns remembered it. As a beardless recruit in the year 63 B.C., he had marched with Pompey through the streets of Jerusalem. With Crassus he had stripped the Temple treasury.

And the imperial government remembered it well—a rich, if rebellious, state that emptied tribute into the national coffers.

Herod the Great, tired and feeble now after thirty-four years of tyranny and carnage, was King of Judea (Palestine). The Romans smiled at that "King." Yes, King—by grace of the Roman senate! But Herod and his father, the unscrupulous Antipater, had proved useful to the imperial forces. Thanks largely to them, the troublesome Maccabean dynasty had been overthrown. The refractory Jews were now more or less subdued. Another *Anschluss* had been accomplished for the Roman Empire.

True, the Jewish people chafed under this ignominious defeat. The Maccabean reign had been a century of glory. Had not its kings once been so powerful as to wrest self-government from the disintegrating empire Alexander the Great had swayed? Military successes, subjection of hostile neighbors, increase of prosperity and prestige—all these they had brought. Now Palestine was governed by an alien tyrant, only half a Jew, Herod the Idumean. The Jewish "empire" was stripped away. The Chosen People had to submit to Roman gentiles. And from the summit of the

Castle of Antonia, annexed to the Temple of God, the graven image of the Roman eagle spread its wings. This was the Palestine in which news of the imperial census was promulgated in that momentous year.

A tiny nation, of some 10,000 square miles, smaller than modern Belgium, hardly larger than Sicily, approximately the size of Vermont. If two Palestines were anchored as an island in Lake Michigan, over 2,000 square miles of water would remain to lap its shores. A country on the same latitude as the southern portion of our Gulf States. A plane flying due west from Jerusalem will pass very close to Macon, Ga., Jackson, Miss., and El Paso, Texas. Flying due north, it will pass about 100 miles west of Moscow and, continuing its course across the North Pole, it might land at Fort Yukon, Alaska.

Yet even this pocket kingdom on the distant fringe of empire must answer to the counting of heads.

Caesar Augustus has been berated through centuries for a pride and cupidity that urged him to decree a universal census. Certainly it is difficult to condone the means Rome had used to spread its bounds. But we are tempted to admire the enterprise of this founder of the Roman Empire in calling for a tallying-up of his resources. Actually he was only continuing some unfinished business. Julius Caesar had begun a census. A decree of the Roman senate had ordered it as far back as 44 B.C.

A look at Augustus will prove interesting. On the assassination of his uncle-and-foster-father, this new Caesar, Octavius, a boy of nineteen, was summoned to Rome to avenge his uncle and protect his own rights. With Mark Antony he soon defeated the revolutionists, Brutus and Cassius (42 B.C.). Dissension arose shortly afterward between Octavius and Antony, leading to another civil war. Mark Antony took his own life in 31 B.C.; and Octavius, who had proved to the Romans his military and executive ability, was proclaimed emperor by the senate. *Caesar Octavianus Augustus*: Caesar the Great.

Now, it was Augustus' foreign policy to curtail further territorial expansion. His great ambition was to consolidate the empire. One means to this was a world-wide census. The man had a passion for maps and statistics. Only by a world-wide census, a general computation of persons and

evaluation of estates, could he, the first Roman Emperor, know the actual resources of his great empire.

A census was necessary—for purposes of taxation and military conscription. And a census was useful—for estimating possible strength of armed rebellions in such provinces and princedoms as did not properly appreciate the Roman Peace. Hence, "there went forth a decree from Caesar Augustus that a census of the whole world should be taken."

Now, a census can be a bothersome thing, and usually is, both to the census officials and the people at large. The common man realizes he is seldom benefited by such businesses and is annoyed by them.

Just imagine then the reaction of the ordinary people to this decree! It required all those who now lived, by accident of birth or travel, outside the town or village of their ancestors, to disrupt business, leave home and undergo the discomforts and even perils of a winter's journey. Besides, traveling costs money. And all for what? To register at the command of the despicable Roman rulers.

The Jews knew what that meant—"to register." The Greek word Saint Luke uses (*apographēin*) and which our New Testament translates *to register* does not actually signify declaring one's bank account and property, real or personal. It simply says to register one's name, age, address and occupation. Yet in all likelihood it meant both. At any rate, a true Israelite knew certainly it meant one of two things: Roman taxes or the first step before an invasion of Palestine to take over the "allied kingdom" as an outright province of the empire. The Jews had seen both these calamities fall upon their next-door neighbors. Both were to descend upon their own heads six years later.

Two circumstances connected with this census may strike us as odd. How could the Romans enforce such an unpopular ordinance in what passed for an independent kingdom? Why was not the registration held in the local village, or at least in what we might call the nearest county-seat, as was the Roman custom?

The answer to the first of these questions we have already intimated. Herod had been put in office by the Romans, and he ruled only by Roman backing. Long ago the Jews would have liquidated him, if it had not been for fear of Caesar. Moreover, Herod was in particularly bad odor with Augustus at that very moment. Only recently the Emperor had served him notice: "Up to now I have treated you as a friend; from now on I shall treat you as a subject." Hence, when a universal

census was decreed, Herod acted, either out of necessity or to ingratiate himself with Augustus.

But shifting persons about to register for a census—does that not seem inefficient, even needlessly cruel? Not if we consider Roman ways and Jewish customs. Like the British government in our own day, the Romans had the good sense to adapt themselves as much as possible, in the interests of peace, to the customs of the people they ruled. We know from extant papyri that in Egypt a census was conducted every fourteen years in much the manner Saint Luke indicates. In adjacent Palestine it was the ancient Hebrew custom to take a census according to tribes and families. To do this more easily and in more orderly fashion it seems to have been necessary for everyone to go "to his own city," that is, to the home town of his ancestors. However, some Scripture scholars are of opinion that one had to return only to the place of his official residence.

Hence Saint Joseph—"because he was of the house and family of David"—was obliged to travel to Bethlehem, David's city, some seventy miles south. Was the enrolment obligatory on our Blessed Lady, too? Probably not. All we know for certain is that Mary accompanied Saint Joseph to Bethlehem.

Immediately several reasons for this suggest themselves. Possibly women also fell under the law of census, or Mary went because she may have owned some property and, as a property-holder, may have been obliged to register. (Mary, too, we know was of the family of David. On the supposition she was the only child of Saint Joachim and Saint Anne, she would have fallen heir to their little possessions.) Perhaps she went to avoid any unpleasantness that might occur at Nazareth on the birth of the Christ Child, miraculously conceived (as the Angel had revealed to Saint Joseph) before their marriage. Lastly, why could she not have gone—and this is quite natural—simply because she was Joseph's virginal wife? She loved her husband, "a just man" and a great Saint. And he loved her—just as we love her. Who can know Mary and not love her? Soon the infant Saviour was to be born. Saint Joseph could not leave her now: Mary needed his help and care. So Mary accompanied him.

"And Joseph also went from Galilee out of the town of Nazareth into the town of David . . . to register, together with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child."

Caesar may have meant that one name should be registered. The census taker could now put down three. Joseph of Nazareth, of David, carpenter. Mary, his wife. Jesus.

CHRISTMAS ON THE ROCK

DAVE PRUDHOMME

Maybe Guadalcanal isn't the only island in the South Pacific that goes by the name of The Rock. A name like that is a natural if you've known what it is to "sweat it out" from a year to two years on some rain-drenched, sun-broiled, unromantic little outpost in the sea.

But Guadalcanal had a sort of priority on the name. It was the first island to be invaded, so here was island existence at its worst—rampant malaria, black mud, violent heat. Even in a geological sense the name is fitting, for beyond the palm-groves, the grasslands and the patchwork foothills, the Kavo Mountain Range juts upward to a height of 8,000 feet—a series of massive blue ramparts, frowning and invulnerable.

Christmas, 1943—what a funny Christmas it was! Everything was funny on Guadalcanal. There on the island we wished each other Merry Christmas, not in a setting of snow and sleigh-bells, but in the hottest part of the Solomons summer, dressed only in shorts and field shoes and perspiring from our foreheads to our feet. While the sun beat down mercilessly from a copper sky, the camp loudspeaker broadcast *Jingle Bells* and *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*.

Like most every Yank camp in the world, we made the most of our Yuletide. The day before, I went out in the jungle, dug up a bush vaguely resembling a Christmas tree, planted it in a GI helmet, and propped them both on a wash-bucket camouflaged by a green duffle-bag. Out of a red box-cover I shaped a horrible-looking poinsetta, and pinned that on the duffle. Scavenging through the camp next door, I managed to steal, without a qualm of conscience, seventeen strands of tinsel and three feet of red tree-draping—how those decorations ever reached The Rock I'll never know. But I hung them on the tree with all the finesse of Dad dressing the Christmas tree in the family living-room. When my hut-mates came in, they stood opened-mouthed before that little tree—complete with tinsel, draping and bugs. Around its base we piled the gifts our families had sent us and felt, somehow, that Christmas had come to the Quonset hut.

That night, Christmas Eve, a gang of us got in a jeep and drove down to the thatched church that sat by the sea, beneath the tall palms and the stars—built by Melanesian natives for the Naval Base. We went to a midnight Mass there—a thing you would long remember if you had seen it.

The little church was packed until it could hold no more; the men stood around the outside of it in semi-circular rows, ten yards deep. A brass band marched up, unabashedly sat down, and made the ground tremble with *Adeste Fidelis* and *Silent Night*. Most of them were out of tune and we winced, but after all it was Christmas and nobody minded. The inside of the church was as cheerful as our chapel back home—ablaze with candles fitted into brass shell-casings, festooned with green branches and red berries from jungle trees. The men outside could see the Mass perfectly because the church was nothing but windows—without panes.

Now and then during the Mass the honking of jeeps and noises in the camps around us were audible. But the boys in the church and around the church didn't hear them. They were gazing at the altar, at the candles, at the lovely painting of the Madonna and Child which somebody had thoughtfully shipped across the Pacific for this very night. Somehow this wasn't an island in the hot Southern Sea. It was Bethlehem.

Christmas day our camp relaxed in various ways. Some opened their Christmas packages, some talked about other Christmases at home, some played horseshoes. In our own hut the three of us gazed for the fiftieth time at our Christmas tree and broke out a box of cigars. Somehow or other I found a rickety victrola—table-sized—and borrowed some of the flight surgeon's records, and we regaled ourselves with the luxury of good music—Andre Kostelanetz, Glenn Miller, Debussy, Shostakovich, Tchaikovsky. How close to home it brought us!

Dinner in the mess-hall was a tremendous event—turkey, cranberries, old-fashioned brown gravy, mashed potatoes, fruit-salad, nuts, candy, ice cream—the whole holiday gamut. It took the combined operations of the Army and Navy to accomplish this feat, and for once we did not gripe. In our swank outdoor theatre that the SeaBees built for us out of cocoanut-logs, we watched a Christmas program put on by our enlisted men. The boys had been drilling at this for weeks; Broadway might have sniffed; we loved it.

That night one of the boys in our camp sat down and wrote his family about the way he spent Christmas on The Rock:

"Keep those stockings hanging on the mantelpiece. Keep that candle burning in the window. Keep the soft light shining in the manger. We can see these things across the miles, through the mists, through the ocean spray, through the battle-smoke and storm-clouds. We can see them plainly—more plainly than you will ever know."

MOTHER THERESA MAXIS DUCHEMIN

JOSEPH B. CODE

[AMERICA, in publishing this story, long known to a few but hidden from the general public, departs from its usual practice of not running papers of a largely historical or biographical nature. The third paragraph of this article indicates the reason for such an exception.—EDITOR.]

The one-hundredth anniversary of the foundation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary has been observed with deserved recognition and solemnity. The communities of Monroe, Scranton and Philadelphia, independently of one another, had their respective celebrations. Prelates, priests, Religious of other sisterhoods, along with the laity, joined with the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart in the centennial festivities.

But perhaps the most important feature of the centenary was the publication, during the celebration, of a brochure entitled *Mother M. Theresa Maxis Duchemin, Co-Founder with Reverend Louis Florent Gillet, C.Ss.R., Founder of the Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*. In one respect it transcends in importance the celebration itself, in that it indicates a step forward, on the part of Catholics, in the solution of one of the nation's principal social problems and a happy sign of a more scholarly approach to the writing of the history of the Catholic Church in this country.

The story of Mother Theresa Maxis Duchemin stands out as one of the most interesting, and at the same time one of the most provocative, in the history of the Church in the United States. The appearance of this brochure, over the signature of one of Mother Theresa's spiritual daughters, and bearing, as it does, the *Imprimatur* of the Bishop of Scranton, is a happy recognition of Mother Theresa's rightful place in the history of her community and a document of particular historical and social value.

Mother Theresa's background, as her life, was one of action in which tragedy played an important part. She was born in Baltimore in 1809, the daughter of a Howard of England and a quadroon. Her father was Major Arthur Howard, who had met her mother, Marie Anne Maxis Duchemin, while on a visit to his relatives, the Howards of Baltimore. Her mother was a native of Santo Domingo, who had lost her parents in the racial troubles of Hispaniola in 1793. Her paternal grandfather was a Negro, Maxis by name. The

rest of her people were French, apparently free from racial prejudice of any sort. Brought to Baltimore by the Duchemins, a childless French couple of social position and wealth, she was reared in their household and adopted their name. When Mother Theresa was born she was baptized Marie Alma and, like her mother, took the name of Duchemin. Her benefactors gave her a good education. She spoke English and French with equal ease, knew Latin well and displayed a marked literary excellence, as her letters testify. In appearance she was fair, with blond hair and blue eyes.

Undoubtedly the Duchemins kept in contact with the other Dominican refugees in Baltimore, for Marie Alma, or Almaide (the peculiar Dominican form of the diminutive *Almaita*), is found attending the Sunday School then presided over by Father Joubert in the basement of the chapel attached to Saint Mary's Seminary on Paca Street. Here she met two other refugees, Elizabeth Lange and Marie Magdalene Balas, who later received her as a pupil in their exclusive school, founded for the children of the refugees.

Father Joubert—born James Marie Hector Nicholas Joubert de Muraille—had been ordained a priest at Saint Mary's in 1810 and for some time had been interested in the colored Catholics of Baltimore. Convinced that they could not be saved to the Faith unless they were given a Christian education, he prevailed upon his superiors to allow him to start a school, which received the approval of Archbishop James Whitfield of Baltimore. When he approached the two Dominicans to enlist their services as teachers, he was astonished to learn that for some time they had wanted to become Religious. Their desire and his were the first foundation-stones of the Oblates of Providence. The new sisterhood began functioning in a house near the seminary in 1828. One of the first boarders to be admitted to the school in connection with the convent was Almaide Duchemin. Along with Rosine Bogue, another boarder, Almaide began to follow the rules drawn up for the two teachers by Father Joubert. The four made a common novitiate and on July 2, 1829, they were professed, the first members of the sisterhood. Almaide took the name of Marie Thérèse.

Little is known of the life of Mother Theresa as an Oblate, except that on July 2, 1832, she had the happiness of seeing her own mother professed as Sister Anthony, and that three months later she suffered the loss of her mother, who died while nursing the victims of the cholera epidemic then raging in Baltimore. In 1841 she was chosen Superior of the Oblates, at a time when the sisterhood was facing a great crisis in the serious illness

of Father Joubert. Unfortunately there was no one to take this priest's place, as his Superior General, the Sulpician, M. Garnier of Paris, had informed the priests at Saint Mary's that they were to give up all work outside of the seminary. But for the presence in Baltimore of Father Louis Florent Gillet, a Belgian Redemptorist, the Oblates would have had no one to minister to them. He saw their plight and acted as their Chaplain until his departure for Michigan in 1843. When Father Joubert died on November 5 of that year, mourned by the colored of Baltimore, the Oblates of Providence were truly desolate. Father Louis Deluol, the Superior at Saint Mary's, tried to interest the new Archbishop, Samuel Eccleston, in the pitiable condition of Mother Marie Thérèse and her associates. Occasionally Father Deluol was able to give them Mass. On the other days they had to go out to Mass, and for confession had to stand in line with the parishioners at Saint Alphonsus Church. The word had got around that they were under a cloud, that the Archbishop was not inclined to allow them to continue as a religious institute. Erstwhile friends avoided the Sisters. The number of pupils in the school decreased until Mother Marie Thérèse had to take in washing and mending to meet expenses.

And then Father Gillet returned to Baltimore to seek help for his work in Michigan. He called on the Oblates and gave them a Retreat with Holy Mass in their chapel again. But the future was so dark that Mother Marie Thérèse and another Religious, Sister Ann Constance Schaaf, expressed the desire to be admitted into another sisterhood. Father Gillet asked them to wait. He was thinking of a community for Michigan. With them as a nucleus, he might be able to found his own sisterhood. Upon his return to Monroe, where he had established his headquarters, he would try to get recruits and write to Baltimore.

Mother Marie Thérèse prayed while waiting. Her term of office expired in December, and another Religious succeeded her. Meanwhile she had found in Father Peter Czachert, a Redemptorist at Saint Alphonsus Church, a sympathetic confessor. One day, in the summer of 1845, he sent for her and told her that Father Gillet was ready, that if she were willing to go into a new land and begin life all over again, in surroundings much more primitive than Baltimore, she should go to Michigan. She did not hesitate.

And now begins the second phase of Mother Thérèse's religious life. Until now she was the French-speaking Mother Marie Thérèse Duchemin, who had associated herself with others in the education of Catholic colored children, in what

was generally considered a colored sisterhood. Henceforth she would become the English-speaking Mother Mary Theresa Maxis, foundress of another sisterhood. She arrived in Monroe, September 19, 1845, and kneeling at the feet of Father Gillet, offered herself to him for the great work of education which he previsioned for the institute. He told her to send for Sister Ann Constance, and informed her that he had found a third member for the sisterhood, a Theresa Renault from Grosse Pointe, Michigan. On November 10 the three candidates took possession of their log-cabin convent, after Father Gillet had said Mass for them. Their breakfast was as meager as their kitchen utensils and furniture. They were to suffer many hardships after that, but for the two Baltimoreans there was a stability which had been denied them for so long in Maryland. On November 30, 1845, they put on their new religious habit, patterned after the one worn by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. They repeated their vows according to the formula of Saint Alphonsus Liguori. Father Gillet put the rules of the new congregation into the hands of Mother Theresa, the Superior, and gave to Sister Ann Constance the name of Sister Mary Ann. The reception of the third candidate did not take place until December 8, when she became Sister Mary Celestine.

Whether or not it was in memory of former days, Father Gillet called his institute the Sisters of Providence. The name was changed in 1847 to the present title, and the dress of the habit, with the scapular, was soon changed to blue.

For ten years Mother Theresa directed the destinies of the sisterhood. At home the school flourished and, after the first years of struggle, the community took on a new life. In 1858 a call came for Sisters from the famous Father Vincent O'Reilly, the pioneer priest of northeastern Pennsylvania. Mother Theresa was doubly happy: Sisters were needed to work among the poor of Saint Joseph's, Pennsylvania, and by accepting the call they would be brought closer to the Redemptorists in Philadelphia. The Rule was still unfinished, as Father Gillet had been called away from Monroe a little more than a year after the sisterhood had been founded. Mother Theresa wanted to have the Rule completed as soon as possible by a Redemptorist. Bishop Peter Paul Lefevere, of Detroit, gave his permission for the mission, and Bishop John Nepomucene Neumann, of Philadelphia, welcomed the Sisters to Pennsylvania.

In less than a year a second call came from Pennsylvania, this time from Bishop Neumann himself, who wanted sisters for a school in Reading. But Bishop Lefevere refused to allow Mother

Theresa to accept the invitation. Not only was she surprised, for no Sisters were being asked for in Michigan, but she was embarrassed, as Bishop Neumann was sending vocations to the mother-house. Undoubtedly someone had told Bishop Lefevere of Mother Theresa's feelings, for, calling at Monroe, he reprimanded her for what he termed her critical attitude toward his decision and, dismissing her to her cell, assembled the Sisters in the mother-house chapel. He announced that he was appointing Sister Mary Joseph their new Superior. He then informed Mother Theresa that within three days she was to leave Monroe for Saint Joseph's, taking with her two other sisters who, with her, would replace in Pennsylvania three Sisters to be returned to Michigan.

Mother Theresa bore her cross humbly. On April 4, 1859, she left the convent which she had founded and over which she had presided for fourteen years as Superior. When she arrived in Pennsylvania she handed Father O'Reilly a letter which had been written him by Father Edward Joos, the spiritual director of the Monroe Sisters. Father O'Reilly took counsel with Bishop Neumann, with the result that no Sisters were returned to Michigan, the Pennsylvania convent was constituted as a new mother-house, and the new mission was opened at Reading.

But Mother Theresa was not happy. She grieved over the separation from Michigan, and when Bishop Neumann died before the Rule was completed she began to observe that a number of changes were being introduced contrary to what she and Father Gillet, as founders, had decided part of the institute. In time she looked upon herself as the chief stumbling-block to the reunion with Monroe, and suffered the illusion that if she would go into voluntary exile with the Grey Nuns of Ottawa, with whom she had become friendly before leaving Michigan, the difficulties might more easily adjust themselves. She finally decided on this step, arriving in Canada on the Feast of the Purification, 1867. And thus begins the third phase of Mother Theresa's extraordinary life.

For eighteen years Mother Theresa lived in exile. During all this time she longed for her own sisterhood, making repeated requests to return either to the Monroe mother-house or to one of the two Pennsylvania foundations, which had come into being in Scranton and Philadelphia. But to all these appeals a deaf ear was turned. Bishop Lefevere was adamant; Archbishop James Frederick Wood, of Philadelphia, would never grant the necessary permission for her to return to his diocese, and Bishop William O'Hara, of Scranton, was unwilling to allow her to come to his Sisters,

since she had left the jurisdiction of Archbishop Wood, who was still living.

But Archbishop Wood finally died, in 1883. Mother Gonzaga, head of the Philadelphia community, petitioned the new Ordinary, Archbishop Patrick Joseph Ryan, for the permission to bring Mother Theresa home to her Sisters. The request was granted and Mother Theresa's exile was over.

"How wonderful and adorable are the ways of God!" wrote Mother Theresa in her diary the day she received the news from Mother Gonzaga. A few days afterwards she left Ottawa, on January 20, 1885, carrying with her the love and blessing of every Grey Nun of the Cross.

It was evening when Mother Theresa arrived at Westchester, the mother-house of the Philadelphia sisterhood, a few minutes before the Angelus sounded. As the carriage came up the driveway she saw a sight which made her heart quicken—long rows of blue habits, drawn up on either side of the entrance—her daughters—to welcome her. One detached herself from the rest. It was Sister Mary Ann, loyal, true and brave from the first days of darkness and misrepresentation in Baltimore. She was old and feeble now; she could hardly walk. But she was a link with the past. And then Mother Theresa realized that the past did not count. It was the living present, and here they were, the first two Sisters of the Immaculate Heart, joined in the community they founded. It was the present that really mattered: the welcome she saw around her, the Tabernacle towards which she was walking in thankful adoration, the cell which had been prepared for her.

The days stretched into years, seven of them, during which she edified the community by her simplicity, obedience, humility and charity.

Some have wondered if she did not see in the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a proof that her life was not a failure. More likely she never thought of her years of crucifixion as even remotely connected with the success of her sisterhood.

Mother Theresa died on January 22, 1892. Father Augustine Gaudet, a man well known for his sanctity and her confessor in Ottawa for many years, wrote, when he heard of her death, that Mother Theresa, "obedient and simple as a child," had lived a life admirable for its virtues, especially for its charity toward those who had been the principal cause of her trials.

As the years pass by Mother Theresa will grow in stature. For the story of her life, as it becomes more widely known, will lead to higher planes of fairness, beyond all barriers of racial prejudice, more and still more of God's children in America.

AMERICA'S HOUSING STORY: II

JOHN CARSON

(Continued from last week)

"I have been in this country since your revolution began in 1932," remarked one of our Latin-American friends a few years ago.

The "revolution" began in relation to the problem in 1929 and 1930 when economic bankruptcy and resultant chaos caused thousands of houses to become derelicts, adrift on what then seemed to be a boundless sea. The Federal Government quickly organized the Home Owners Loan Corporation as a haven of refuge, or a receivership, to save home owners but, principally, to save insurance companies and banks and the basic financial structure.

The next step was related to economic recovery and the creation of jobs, as the Government agreed that the "largest single unexploited outlet for investment funds" was the construction industry. In cooperation with the managers of large investment funds, the Government developed a program of "insured mortgages," and created the Federal Housing Administration to administer the law.

In large measure, sources of credit for housing projects were frozen by State and national laws prior to 1933. Insurance companies and savings banks and other publicly regulated investment organizations were not permitted to lend more than two-thirds of the real value of the property involved. Few house-buyers could make an initial payment of a third of the real value, or a fourth of the real value, and the great mass could not even "pay down" one-tenth of the value. When the Government arranged to insure mortgages up to 80 per cent and 90 per cent of the real value, frozen investment funds were made liquid for the more fortunate families, those with incomes of \$2,500 a year and more.

But insured mortgages and FHA did not begin to solve the housing problem. In one typical year, for example, the average annual income of those who got insured mortgages was \$2,968. Yet 92 per cent of the people had incomes of less than \$2,968. Most people could not buy "mortgage-insured houses." The general value of houses with insured mortgages in 1938, for example, was \$5,530. Only 4 per cent of insured mortgages were on houses valued at less than \$3,000, and only 19 per cent on values of less than \$4,000. As the general rule of housing economics was that

a man should not attempt to buy a house valued at more than twice his annual income, and as 79 per cent of our people had incomes of less than \$2,000 a year, the insured-mortgage program merely skimmed the cream of the demand. The Government then turned to subsidized housing for low-rental purposes, and made large grants of money to the Public Works Administration, the Works Progress Administration, the Farm Security Administration and, finally, in the war emergency period, to the Federal Works Agency.

It was contended then, of course—and it is still justly contended—that most of the less fortunate people would have to buy "second-hand houses." Good second-hand houses or third-hand houses were not to be rejected on any basis. But in a country where new housing units built each year constituted less than ten per cent of the total, the buyers most often had to be content with "tenth-hand houses," and slums were bred by those conditions.

The general picture is little changed as Congress begins its work. Where in our large cities can a new house be purchased for less than \$3,000? The National Housing Agency estimates that 4,500,000 of the families which will need housing in the next ten years will be able to pay only \$3,000 and less, and most often it is much less.

Mere statistics about annual incomes do not tell the entire story, however. One of the witnesses before the Senate Postwar Planning Committee emphasized that the security of annual incomes over a long period, sufficiently long to protect the initial investment of the house-buyer, was the most important consideration. He added that "when the Federal Government inspires and encourages a family to invest years of its savings in a house and then assumes no responsibility for the security of the annual income of that family over a 15-year or 20-year period, the Government may be justly indicted for being an accessory to the fact in a crime of grand larceny."

Witnesses before the Senate committee divided the future consumers of housing into three very rough classes. In one class were those with incomes of \$1,500 and less a year. Few in that class, it was agreed, should be encouraged to risk hard-earned savings in initial payments on a house. They must be housed in subsidized rental-housing, or old houses. The second class included those with incomes of from \$1,500 or \$1,800 a year to \$3,000 a year. This class constituted what was described as the "no-man's-land" of housing, which would have to be supplied through subsidized low-rental housing and more liberal insured-mortgage plans

and through what has become known as "the mutual housing plan." The people with incomes of \$3,000 and more can protect themselves through insured mortgages and the mutual housing plan.

The legislation now proposed and being discussed before the Senate Committee on Banking and Currency establishes the National Housing Agency which will have authority over all government housing organizations. It then would seek to accomplish the following purposes:

Research, housing planning and studies.—Authorizes appropriations of \$12,500,000 for a five-year program in housing research and to encourage local community planning. Authorizes appropriation of \$25 million of Federal funds, to be matched by local funds, for local housing and planning studies.

Housing for middle-income groups.—Permits insured mortgages up to 95 per cent; extends the period of amortization to 32 years; reduces the maximum interest rate from 5 per cent to 4 per cent, and permits "firm commitments to builders up to 85 per cent of the cost of the house," and thus encourages construction in volume even before owner-occupants are assured. This plan is limited to mortgage-loans which do not exceed \$5,000.

Mutual housing.—Permits and authorizes insurance mortgages for mutual home ownership up to 95 per cent of the cost and also permits insured mortgages up to 90 per cent for rental projects. The amortization period is to be 40 years, and the interest rate is to be a maximum of 3½ per cent.

Yield insurance.—Establishes also a "yield-insurance system" through which a direct investor in a housing project would be able to insure an annual yield of 2¾ per cent.

Urban Development.—Provides \$500 million of loans to communities for land assembly and clearance projects and loans of \$50 million a year to improve these projects. Provides also for appropriations of \$4 million a year, to be matched by local contributions, for the purpose of devaluing land to a sound base.

Low-rent public housing.—Authorizes appropriations of \$22 million a year for four years to assist local housing authorities in the development of low-rental public housing.

Rural housing.—Authorizes annual contributions of \$5 million a year for five years, to improve and develop farm housing.

Disposal of permanent public war housing.—Authorizes the sale of these houses to communities for local low-rent housing programs.

The bill before the Senate is not going to be approved without a struggle. Real-estate dealers and some contractors and related and friendly financial interests have organized one of the most powerful pressure groups in this Congress. They have declared war on "public housing" and their battle cry is "free enterprise." Already they have been described as "the opposition." Advocates of public housing are organized to support the bill.

But the inspiring theme in the housing story, as it is developing, is the "mutual housing program." One leader of labor who was indifferent and even opposed to mutual housing a few months ago, has now stated that "the mutual housing proposals are the most dynamic proposals in this legislation." The mutual housing program was described before the Senate committee as the "REA plan for housing" and there is a marked similarity to the plan through which the rural areas of the country were electrified.

The mutual housing plan provides that groups of people may organize their mutual associations, or cooperative associations, and under the supervision of government authorities may plan and build and manage and buy their housing projects. The plan has been proved so successful that incredulous housing officials in government agencies who have discouraged interest in the proposal are seeking explanations. In South Bend, Indiana, and in Dayton, Ohio, mutual housing projects have accomplished the lowest cost for management of housing projects of any housing projects in the country. Occupants of these housing projects have become so enthusiastic over their success that they are using their own money to carry their message to the people of all the States.

At a recent luncheon in the Capital, where the pending housing bill was discussed, a very conservative Republican Congressman told of a visit of his House committee to Europe to examine into housing developments. He said he "thought his committee would be unanimous in the statement that nowhere in Europe did they find housing which was superior to that in this country, except in Sweden." He then added: "I do not see why we cannot have beautiful apartments and housing developments such as they have in Sweden." Someone interposed that "that is cooperative housing." The Congressman gulped once and added, "the Government has something to do with it, also." It is true that cooperatives fixed the tone for Swedish housing development and are now doing more than 30 per cent of all construction in Sweden. By intelligent cooperative planning the worst features of the present housing situation can be licked.

The dominant note of the Feast of Christmas is its quietness. The Resurrection was announced by a great trembling of the earth. At the descent of the Holy Spirit, a sound came from Heaven like that of a great wind blowing. But the birth of our Lord happened in the silence of midnight, when all the earth lay locked in quietness. No noise heralded his coming. An angel song sounded for a moment, and suddenly died away, leaving the shepherds to wonder if they had really heard it.

Our Blessed Lord slipped into the stream of human life as a man might slip into a hurrying crowd, his entrance hardly marked. Or, in the Scripture metaphor that runs all through the Christmas Office, He stole upon the world like the sun, not thunderously, but with infinite quiet.

Nevertheless, His soundless entrance should not deceive us. There is no power in the night's darkness that can make it hold its ground against the silent advance of dawn. Light is a conquering thing, pervasive, irresistible. And Christ, coming as the Light of the World, came with conquest in His very being. As the *Introit* of the Third Mass reminds us, the Child who was born to us bore upon His shoulder the power of a kingly rule.

But His Kingdom comes as He Himself came—quietly. His enemies are indeed a noisy lot. They march and shout and lay about them clamorously. They get the screaming headlines. Their achievements are made to resound and reverberate. This is natural. The forces opposed to Christ are those of strife and conflict and disorder. And these are noisy things, created by noisy means—loud, angry voices and the clash of selfish interests.

But with Christ comes peace. And the advent of peace, unlike that of war, does not make a deafening racket. Peace is a thing of quiet, made in quiet ways. It is a fruit of the spirit, brought forth in soundless spiritual travail. Do we realize this? And have we confidence enough in all the quiet things that are creative of peace? Here are some of them.

Every moment of prayer, alone or in communion with the praying Church. Every victory over evil won in the silence of the heart. Every new strength given, at the cost of sacrifice, to the bonds of family life. Every rejection of prejudice against men of different color, creed, race or nation. Every resolute determination to discard slogans and labels, and to pass discerning Christian judgment. Every impulse to a wider charity that expels all criminal unconcern over injustice and human suffering. Every inner acceptance of full Christian responsibility for the salvation of the

world. Every scourging of the timidity and discouragement that paralyzes apostolic effort.

Patient gathering of the facts about our complicated social problems. Hard study of the principles that must govern their solution. Discipline of self to the wisdom and tact needed that action may be at once guided by principle and adapted to the demands of a concrete situation. Perhaps above all, unremitting effort at the quiet task of teaching the full truth that one has fully mastered.

Our past failures at these quiet things helped make war. Our successes at them will help make peace. In quietness and confidence is our strength.

LOAN TO BRITAIN

The final terms of the loan to Britain are the fruit of shrewd bargaining and some necessary compromise.

The British wanted an outright gift of \$6 billion to put their war-smashed economy back on its feet. They also wanted canceled an unfavorable Lend-Lease balance of about \$25 billion.

For our part, the Administration was willing, in accord with the original Lend-Lease agreement, to grant a settlement "such as not to burden commerce between the two countries," which, in practice, would amount to outright cancelation of the British deficit. The United States was agreeable, also, to granting a loan at a low rate of interest, but was opposed to an outright gift. Most of all, we were determined that the arrangement with the British should tend to free the cluttered channels of international commerce and promote expanded world trade.

The tentative agreement signed on December 5 in Washington is closer to the American position than to the British. We have agreed to a loan of \$3,750,000,000 at two per cent interest to be repaid in fifty-five years. We have granted in addition a \$650 million credit for recently shipped Lend-Lease goods and for goods delivered after Lend-Lease ended. This money is likewise to be repaid in fifty-five years. For the rest, we have agreed to cancel all Lend-Lease obligations incurred by the British. In return, the British have consented to make dollars available to nations in the so-called sterling area, and to support American proposals to reduce tariffs, curb cartels and abolish other restrictive trade practices.

Before this agreement is ratified by Congress, we can expect to hear all the old isolationist arguments. We shall be reminded that Britain still

owes us a big debt from World War I, that we shall again be called Uncle Shylock if we dare some day to collect what is due us, that we can expect few benefits from foreign trade. In addition, we shall be told that by helping Britain now we are promoting Socialism.

However valid these arguments may be, they do not offset the advantage to us of helping the British at the present time. If we turn the British away and oblige them to chart a lone course, we shall be forced to live in a postwar world of trade restrictions and rival economic blocs. We shall doom all hope of international collaboration, even on the political level. The four-and-one-half billion dollars we are advancing to the British is the kind of investment that cannot be judged in purely monetary terms. It must be evaluated in terms of the world order we hope to achieve.

LET CHARITY WORK

The Catholic Association for International Peace, the American Friends Service Committee, five interdenominational Protestant agencies have all sent petitions to the Government to open the way for private charitable organizations to operate for the benefit of starving ex-enemy peoples. AMERICA has issued a similar plea before; it earnestly supports these petitions now.

It is perhaps not realized by the American people that UNRRA cannot, by its constitution, function for the benefit of Germans (or Japanese, for that matter). An exception has been made for Austrians, and UNRRA has received an urgent plea from the Allied Council for Austria to undertake the task of feeding that country. But Germans are dependent on the ministrations of the various Allied military governments. Those governments have set the daily calory-content for Germans at 1,550, which is a sub-normal standard. On October 14, a survey of German health authorized by General Eisenhower recommended that it be raised to 2,000. Even to keep the 1,550 level, means large imports into Germany.

It may be that the Allied occupation forces will eventually solve the problem. They have not solved it to date, and all reports indicate that the ravages of famine, especially among German infants, will mount in these winter months.

Meantime, there is a vast potential of American good will and American supplies that can start flowing almost immediately into Germany; the Government has only to give the word.

PRICE OF WITHDRAWAL

The consequences of our precipitate military withdrawal from Europe are beginning to be felt. It bodes ill for the success of American policy abroad and the cause for which we fought the war.

We have tried to assure the world that the United States is not going to let the world drift again into war by holding aloof from the problems emerging out of this one. To us, the resounding 89-2 approval of the United Nations Charter by the Senate was evidence enough that this time America intends to play a role in world affairs fully proportionate to her greatness and her contribution to the victory. This new international policy was further nailed down by the prompt enactment of the UNO Participation Act, unburdened by isolationist reservations. Europe should weigh the significance of these actions.

But Europe is more impressed by what Europe sees with her own eyes. And she sees American morale at the bottom, and our superb military power disintegrating, while Congress is bombarded by demands for ever-greater speed in returning our veterans from overseas. We cannot blame the French, for instance, for thinking that our military withdrawal is a prelude to political withdrawal. In consequence the French are not to blame if they feel compelled to insist on policies predicated on their fear that they may have to deal with the German problem of the West on their own.

Then, again, what meaning can our pressure for democratic governments in the Balkans and in the forthcoming Polish elections have, when our voice sounds hollow in the emptiness left by our departing troops?

It is a military axiom that a victory, to be complete, must have a follow-through. "The war is over, but there is no peace in the world," as the Bishops said only recently. We want to have our war-weary troops come home promptly. But it is only right to consider the full price we may have to pay for this consolation. We must ask ourselves most searchingly whether we are committing a cruelty of a very special kind to our war dead by undermining our nation's prestige and influence at this moment.

An encouraging sign that points the way to a solution was the scheduled departure during this month of 40,000 young replacements for European occupation duty. A much more encouraging sign is the fact that the voluntary enlistment program of the Army has succeeded, against the expectations of the War Department. This second

fact is especially important because our military strength abroad should come from the new, enlarged Regular Army and not from recently-inducted 18-year-olds.

Those who agree with the Bishops in their recent protest over the downward trend of world politics should heartily second the contention that continued American interest in Europe is an obligation to our war dead and to the cause of a Christian Europe. We have no intention of leaving the field wide open to Soviet ideological infiltration. We intend to encourage those people abroad who stand for what we stand. And we do not want to throw dismay into the hearts of all good men who think that the homesickness of our troops is a prelude to another political withdrawal from Europe. In the interests of American prestige and the cause of peace, we should disabuse the world of such unfounded notions.

ACTION ON HOUSING

Mr. Snyder's concise report on the national housing problem brought prompt action from the executive branch of the Government. Immediately the President appointed Wilson W. Wyatt, former Mayor of Louisville, as Housing Expediter charged with producing the results looked to in the report. The appointment is a significant step toward clearing up what has become a confusing and chaotic situation.

Since much of the Housing Expediter's success depends on the cooperation he receives from the construction industry, it is well to note the reaction of the builders to the report. Housing men generally, and the National Association of Home Builders in particular, through its executive vice-president, Frank W. Cortwright, approve the first two points of Mr. Snyder's housing program: namely the quick release of government-held housing units and supplies, and the restoration of priorities on building materials.

Reactions, however, to the prospect of price ceilings on old and new housing, mentioned under the third point of Mr. Snyder's report, evoked unfavorable response. This attitude is definitely in line with views expressed at the meeting last month of the National Association of Real Estate Boards (*AMERICA*, December 8, p. 255). Nevertheless, the anti-inflation measure—more in accord with Mr. Bowles' thinking—is the most important of all. Upon its wise application will depend the ultimate success of Mr. Wyatt's work and the prevention of a housing "boom" with its consequent foreclosures and deflation.

It was to be expected that the war's end would

find us with a housing shortage and with a rather disorganized housing industry. Within the last two months, however, since restrictions on prices and materials were lifted, trends have become evident which indicate what seems like chaos. Among these trends are the following:

1. Acute shortage of certain building materials and a lack of manpower in the skilled building trades. The 216,000 on-site workers employed in residential building must be doubled to produce even 500,000 housing units in 1946.

2. Diversion of critical materials and manpower into non-residential construction, such as industrial plants, and even, so it is said, into such unessential projects as race-tracks, road-houses and country clubs.

3. Hoarding of materials by some industry members, who thus hamper other builders.

4. A pronounced tendency of both investors and builders to favor more profitable construction for the third of our families whose normal income exceeds \$2,000 a year and to keep away from housing for the low- and middle-income groups.

5. Inflationary increase in housing prices immediately upon the lifting of restrictions on October 15. Despite their protests there are indications that builders do not universally oppose inflation.

6. Investments in homes at prices which can only be labeled unsafe (from the investor's viewpoint) or speculative.

The above trends are generally recognized as existing at the present time. What may be forgotten, however, is that they are only a more acute manifestation of a disease which has become perennial in the construction industry. Its inflation-deflation cycles tend to be particularly violent and even more irrational than the general business cycle. While there is no single cause assignable, a prominent reason is undoubtedly the excessive individualism of builders, their lack of planning and cooperation. The temporary plans of the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion and of the new Housing Expediter will only tide the industry over the present crisis; they will not cure the disease. That requires considerable planning and definite legislative action.

For bringing permanent order into the housing industry the Wagner-Ellender-Taft Bill, at least in its broad objectives, seems to be on the right track. Its loan-insurance provisions would be of real help to the low- and middle-class groups so long forgotten, and its unified Housing Administration should be of real assistance in coordinating the efforts which now, at times, work against each other. The goal is housing for *all* the people.

LITERATURE AND ART

CHRISTMAS IN CLAUDEL

SISTER MARY DAVID

ONE OF THE MINOR JOYS of Heaven, it seems to me, will be exploring the personalities of our fellow-Saints, canonized or not. The fun can be anticipated here below, as who cannot testify? When they offer to initiate us into their own visions, we should be churls to draw back. Let us follow, then, upon the full-throated invitation of Paul Claudel's *Marching Song for Christmas*:

... Blow out the lamp and come, for I shall walk in front.

'Tis I who have made the path, and I who shall take the lead.

Let none other push himself forward!

Rejoicing like a giant to run his course, Claudel has penetrated more and more deeply into the mystery of the Nativity, ever since that Christmas Day of 1886 when the Catholic Faith suddenly flowered in his heart. He was eighteen then, and had been horribly near despair. He had attended the Christmas Mass at Notre Dame de Paris merely as a spectacle, and had returned to Vespers, as he himself tells us, just for want of anything better to do. But at the *Magnificat*, suddenly and surely, he believed. All the rest of his life has been a jubilant ascent to God.

All Christian art, a Thomist philosopher in exile recently assured me, is an art of the Incarnation. So it is with Claudel. He wrote to the Abbé Joseph de Tonquedec:

For me, poetry is the expression of strong, deep feeling and secondarily the means of that progressive evangelization of all the regions of my intelligence and of all the powers of my soul that I have been trying to pursue since the day I was converted.

To a poet such as he, what does Christmas mean?

First of all, Claudel goes to the Divine Child through His Mother. No one who has read *La Vierge à Midi* can fail to realize that the patriot who thanks Our Lady for having saved France is overwhelmingly buried in her Son Who thanks her just because she is. Claudel loves Our Lady with the heart of a child and the passion of a grown man who has known stark loneliness.

Perhaps it is this love which has made him so delicately perceptive. Describing Our Lady's expectation, he says of her, in the *Hymn of the Sacred Heart*, that she is "inside the world." So absorbed has she become in awaiting the birth of her Divine Son that her spirit is at the very heart of the universe, recollected in its Creator.

Mysticism, however, has made no selfish introvert of Paul Claudel. Though he be aware of the poignant meaning of mystery, he is also observant of its effect upon his neighbors. That is the whole atmosphere surrounding the *Marching Song for Christmas*. You see the family, muffled and gaitered, ready to breast the snow under a gorgeous starlit sky. Then you are told that not only are the children and the grandparents in the group, but also one or two agnostic neighbors, who cannot resist the gay contagion of a trip to Midnight Mass. Besides,

It is too dark to count, but I should say we are more than we were just now—

If the souls of the dead have joined us, why, welcome to you, old friends!

The company travels on, passing through Bethlehem, on the track of Mary and Joseph, while the Prodigal Son is

sitting at an inn in the town in the company of the census-men. (This, by the way, is the sort of deliberate anachronism that infuriates Claudel's critics, while it is for us merely one more instance of the universality of his concept: what are space and time, in the light of eternity?) Beyond the caravansary, the path turns into the fields. There the family waits until chimes of midnight sound. Sending the others ahead, the leader waits, meditating:

When He made a cross over chaos, the Omnipotent had thy face before Him,

As I have it now in my heart, O great Lily-flower, pure Virgin! . . .

Deliver the Man to His God, O Gate most royal, at last unsealed!

But if the Psalms of the liturgy are echoed in Claudel's description of the birth of Christ, so are the humorous interludes of medieval drama. The poet sketches a rapid panorama of the Prodigal Son, hearing the angel chorus and scratching away the frost on the window-pane so that he may see. Then there is a procession of the shepherds, led by the oldest one,

Holding the company's drum, which he beats with the strength of both hands.

There is, too, an unforgettable apostrophe to the angel guardians of nations, a cosmic sweep reminiscent of Aeschylus' signal-fires on the mountains: from Persia to the North they are to send the message of redemption, just as the officers of the Mass exchange the kiss of peace.

Intimacy, rather than splendor, is characteristic of Claudel's portrayal of the Holy Family. Describing the Epiphany, he rallies the Magi for being "twelve days late." His well known lyric about the Child Jesus of Prague belongs, surely, to the Christmas season. He makes us visualize the crowned Infant as the little boys in the nursery see Him, a dear Friend guarding their sleep. Especially vivid is his portrayal of the Presentation of the Child at Candelmas—early on a rainy morning, Our Lady offering her Son in secret, while the bigwigs of Jerusalem "read the paper and . . . plot against the Romans."

Faith and hope and love reach such a pitch of ecstasy in Claudel's lyric poetry that sometimes language absolutely fails him, as when he cries out:

Diamond of air in flower!

This is the hunger of the finite for the Infinite:

I will have even the sun—I fling my arms wide to

Thy measure! . . .

Lord, give me only Thyself, and it is enough!

It is a privilege for our generation to be contemporaries of a genius so steeped in the Faith, so whole-heartedly one of us. Christmastime brings him and us even closer together.

WILDERNESS CHRISTMAS

FRANCES E. ROLLINS

THROUGHOUT THE BROAD SWEEP of territory that now forms the great heart of North America, thousands of the faithful will soon flock again to their churches to pay homage to the Infant Saviour. How few of the thousands will pause to realize, however, that this inspiring devotion is but the natural flowering of the seeds of Faith which were planted here by the Jesuits and other missionaries when this region was a hostile wilderness sprinkled with tiny

French and Indian settlements. Although the missionaries had to cultivate the Faith in reluctant hearts, and had often to nurture it with their own blood, they were occasionally rewarded by outstanding evidence of the success of their work. Fortunately there still survive reports written by the Jesuit missionaries themselves which give us some idea of how Christmas was observed among their savage converts, nearly three hundred years ago. One priest wrote:

All our savages, but especially the Hurons, profess to have a special esteem for the all-endearing mystery of the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I have seen some notable proofs of this given by these latter; they themselves entreated the Father, long before the Feast-day, to make arrangements so as to celebrate it in the most solemn manner possible. They sent their children to seek for what could be used in constructing a grotto, in which they were to make a representation of the mystery; and I took pleasure in hearing a little girl who, having brought with much care a beautiful sort of grass, said that she had done it in the thought and hope that the little Infant Jesus might be laid upon that grass.

In addition to possessing such simple Faith and childlike enthusiasm, the Indians seem also to have had a surprisingly deep understanding of symbols, which they used to convey their reverence for the Nativity of Our Lord. One account describes a procession planned by the Indians themselves at a grand council, in which the tribe divided itself into three companies, each headed by an elected chief, to represent the coming of the three Wise Men from the Orient. The details of the procession indicate that it was by no means a whimsical or haphazard affair. Much labor and perseverance went into the execution of the rather intricate design and reverent character of the ceremony. The three companies, beautifully adorned, and led by the chiefs bearing scepters and gifts, began their march at the sound of a trumpet, and ended it within the chapel before the manger of the Infant Jesus. Here the Indians made a devout Act of Faith, offered their gifts, and entreated the Divine Infant to become Master of the whole village.

The missionary in charge of this tribe of Hurons was edified by a striking gesture which manifested their good will and true Christian charity. "The Christian Algonquins," he wrote, "were afterward invited by the Christian Hurons to a feast, at which they exhorted each other to obey Jesus Christ, who was the true Master of the world." This action seemed particularly significant to a priest living three hundred years ago in a civilization only one step removed from savagery, yet it assumes perhaps a greater meaning today, when good will and Christian charity are in many places doubtful or completely lacking.

Skeptics may be inclined to explain the devotion of the Indian converts as merely the emotional expressions of primitive people, but the actual record dissipates such a theory. The spirit of these neophytes in the Faith was really remarkable. One report, written in the year 1645, gives a fairly comprehensive picture of their spiritual solidity:

The savages have a particular devotion for the night that was enlightened by the birth of the Son of God. There was not one who refused to fast on the day that preceded it. They built a small chapel of cedar and fir branches in honor of the manger of the Infant Jesus; they wished to perform some penance, to prepare themselves for better receiving him into their hearts on that holy day; and even those who were at a distance of more than two days' journey met at a given place to sing hymns in honor of the new-born Child and to approach the table whereat it was His will to become

the adorable food. Neither the inconvenience of the snow nor the severity of the cold could stifle the ardor of their devotion.

There can be no doubt that the Indians loved the Christmas ceremonies deeply, but what is more noteworthy was their seeking of extra penances and vying with one another in making sacrifices to prepare for the coming of the Infant Jesus. These were not exclusively the actions of the women and small children, for according to most accounts the grizzled old chiefs and tough young braves took the initiative in asking permission of the priests for additional prayers and penances. One missionary wrote that it was utterly impossible to refuse all the requests of savage infidels from neighboring territories to attend the Christmas Mass and devotions, for they would come anyway. Apparently the infidels were completely willing to join in the spirit of sacrifice, for they took it upon themselves to kneel for hours in the snow outside the chapel when it would accommodate no more worshipers. The Christian Indians on their part begged the priest, with sincere promises of continued piety, to let them prolong their Christmas prayers and hymns until Easter. This incident the missionary recorded, with the comment: "Can anything more fervent or touching be desired in a country that at first seemed inaccessible to the Faith?"

This was the spirit of Christmas in North America in 1645. Three hundred years have cleared the wilderness, built our cities and replaced the crude wooden chapels with beautiful churches of stone. With all our admirable progress, however, perhaps it would not be too far amiss to leaf back through our history and recapture from its earliest pages their spirit of sacrifice and childlike devotion to offer once more to the Infant Jesus on Christmas, 1945.

POETRY FOR THE CRIB

THE CHRISTMAS SILENCE

Here in the cloister they who seek discover
A wandered fragment of the Christmas silence
That hid itself from the disquieted earth:
The silence of the Virgin bending over
The little Uncreated Innocence
Upon the bed of a most hidden birth,
The silence that was Joseph's sacrament
Through years that were a threshold to this hour
And which was seed and stem to the white flower
That blossomed on his rod,
The speechlessness of the unlettered shepherds
Who stood amazed before the Lamb of God.
The angels sang at Christmas, but their music
Was like a stillness to the inner ear,
Softer than petals from a shaken bough.

They who go walking in the Christmas silence
Through any season of the changing year
Come to a Man with peace upon his brow
And see the Mother and the Infant near.
This house, as once the Saint of Alcantara
Said of Teresa's, is the little hospice
Of Bethlehem.
Cloister or cave—its solitudes shall be
The dwelling of a human trinity
And they who enter learn a wordless language
And the Divine Untold addresses them.

JESSICA POWERS

ANIMALS' CAROL

Small One, we have no melodies
To sing tonight for You.
We cannot think of tune and words
As men, our brothers do.

But listen to our singing blood
Like wine within our veins
Come surging like a carillon
Up through our hapless brains.

And do accept the gift we give—
The brawn we lend to men
That all your wide and wintry world
May sing, come Spring again.

Our fathers tell us every year
The tale their fathers told
About the starlight and the Maid,
The stable and the cold.

And even though to dust we go,
Our bones shall sing in death
That once upon a Christmastime
We warmed You with our breath.

SISTER MARY ADA

THE VOLUNTEER

(Oblatus est quia ipse voluit. Is. 43,7)

No conscript, He the Heavens trod,
By no constraint was born of Mary;
The advent of the Son of God
Was voluntary.

They did not get the room they sought,
The food they needed was not granted,
And this was just exactly what
Our Saviour wanted.

A stable was His nursery,
Those little feet and hands were frozen.
He bore the hardships patiently
Which He had chosen.

Angelic choirs proclaimed His birth,
But only simple shepherds heard them.
To all the embassies of earth
He had preferred them.

No servants waited at His bed:
Two shy and silly creatures eyed Him—
The ox and ass He had decreed
Should be beside Him.

He wanted to be poor and cold,
A waif, a refugee, a stranger,
Lying little, two hours old
Within a manger.

In this wise was our ransom paid.
He built the crib, he threw the hay in.
It was the bed Himself had made
That Jesus lay in.

PATRICK MARY PLUNKETT

TRUMPET FOR YULETIDE

Gabriel, Gabriel, come blow your horn!
The moon's in her meadow, constellations in corn.
The clouds are in fold—a woolly-white throng—
But where are the shepherds to hearken the Song?
And where is a cock with arrogant crest
To herald a Star, nugget-new on the nest?
All the lanes with snow-lovely linen are spread—
But where is a robe for a manger-rude bed?

Gabriel, Gabriel, sky-candles tower;
The moon wears a halo, and holy the hour.
The ox and the ass are astir in the dark—
But when shall the stable emblaze with the spark?
And when shall the stubborn, who stare in the door,
Grow humble and kneel on the earth-beaten floor?
Gabriel, Gabriel, come blow your horn!
The moon's in her meadow . . . a Saviour is born!

LOUIS J. SANKER

OUR LADY'S CHRISTMAS CALLERS

The Lady of the House arose
To smile a greeting to her guests;
Bowed graciously, invited them
To sit awhile, and take their rests.

"These outer rooms are slightly cool,"
She said, "and the lamps are hung quite high.
Won't you come in where things are warm
And there's a Light to visit by."

They threw aside their woolen robes
And followed her into the glow;
Bowed to the gentleman, and then—
Their eyes grew bright—their breath came slow—

Such graciousness and ease were there
That after they arose and gave
Their thanks and left, they didn't even
Realize it was a cave!

THOMAS L. O'BRIEN

CHRISTMAS EVE

The night is full of beauty, and the earth
Frost-gemmed and queenly in its robe of white,
Is waiting; while the moon and all the stars
Sing without words the glory of the night.

Tonight the dreary bog-land smiles again,
The withered bracken dons a coat of lace,
And from each house and cot on hill and vale,
The lighted candle shows a biding place.

Tonight the harshness of familiar sounds
Is softened; the lowing cattle in a shed
Call to the homeless wanderer to share,
As God Himself once shared, their lowly bed.

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BOOKS

CENTENARY CLIMAX

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, AN EXPOSITORY AND CRITICAL STUDY OF HIS MIND, THOUGHT AND ART. By Charles Frederick Harrold. Longmans, Green and Co. \$3.50

HERE, IN ONE VOLUME, we have the comprehensive study of all the facets of Newman's work that has long been needed. It should, I think, supersede all other general studies of Newman's thought and art. Though it appears in the centennial year and month of Newman's conversion, it was not, in the words Newman himself uses of his lectures on *The Idea of a University*, "got up for the occasion." Professor Harrold's volume is the fruit of some dozen or more years of wide-ranging, sympathetic and profound study. Without hesitation I would say not merely that this is the most important book on Newman to appear this year, but that it is one of the most comprehensive works on Newman to appear since Wilfrid Ward's two-volume life was published in 1912.

As the subtitle indicates, this is both an expository and a critical study, and as such is admirably suited to the wide audience it is intended to reach. On the one hand, it is written out of a truly remarkable knowledge of the work of hundreds of scholars who have elucidated the various phases of Newman's life and writings. No close student of Newman can fail to be impressed by the thoroughness with which Professor Harrold has surveyed the work of his predecessors. Yet this critical approach is continually accompanied by such lucid expositions of the content, the tone, the relevance of Newman's books—such valuable *explication*, that is—that the beginning student or the general reader will be no less rewarded by studying the book.

The concise opening section, "Newman and His World," while it does not, strictly speaking, attempt a biographical study of Newman, presents the highlights of his career and makes clear the nature of the intellectual world of which he was a part first at Oxford, then later as a Roman Catholic. Though nothing here is new, all is in proportion; it presents Newman's intellectual history with fidelity and with illuminating emphasis.

In the section that follows, entitled "Three Great Labors," Harrold examines what he has earlier called in his *A Newman Treasury*, the "three great themes" of Newman's entire career: "the problem of the development of religious doctrine, the problem of belief (in a rationalistic age) and the problem of humanistic education in an age of science and of religious revival."

In treating the first of these three themes, Professor Harrold shows how the final doctrine of development is adumbrated in *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, in articles for the *British Magazine* and the *British Critic*, and of course in the great University sermon of 1843. Important as are Harrold's pages concerning the antecedents of Newman's doctrine, the most valuable portions of these chapters are those dealing with the meaning of the term "development," about which there continues to be so much misapprehension.

In point of time, the second of Newman's "great labors" concerned education. Harrold's Chapter V ("Intellectual Excellence: The Idea of a Liberal Education") is chiefly important in relating Newman's thought to his own age. His evidence, gathered from a variety of sources, throws a new light on the *Idea of a University*. Especially good are Harrold's remarks concerning Newman's "gentleman." There is, however, a serious deficiency in Professor Harrold's discussion of Newman's *Idea of a University*. By stressing

the distinctions between "the gentleman" and "the Christian," and knowledge and virtue, which Corcoran has spoken of as a "philosophy of severance," without at the same time giving due weight either to the role of theology and philosophy in integrating the intellectual life of the university or to the "duties of the Church toward Knowledge," Professor Harrold has made Newman's *Idea of a University* seem far more dated and Victorian than it really is.

The third great theme of Newman's work treated by Harrold is the problem of belief or "the logical cogency of faith." Professor Harrold refrains from "technically judging the validity of Newman's arguments" in the *Grammar of Assent*. But he does sum up with fairness the conclusions of technically trained theologians.

It is not possible to discuss in detail every section of Professor Harrold's book. Nothing of importance, however, concerning Newman's work has gone unnoticed. The chapter on Newman's sermons is by far the most searching discussion of them I have ever read. Harrold points out that in the Victorian age "sermons held the place in the public's interest that is now held by fiction," and calls attention to the characteristic styles of some of the acknowledged preachers of the period. His evaluation of Newman's manner and art as a preacher gains much from a comparison with the sermon styles of his most influential contemporaries. Harrold analyzes thoroughly the evolution of Newman's style as a sermon-writer, and concludes with some suggestive pages on Newman's prose style in general.

Professor Harrold's study will appeal first of all to the scholar. Here he will find brought together for the first time the findings of both special and general studies covering the entire range of Newman's work. The scholarship is thorough, yet never pedantic. It is always at the service of a resilient concern for meaning and significance. There are dozens of passages in which fresh light is thrown on Newman's thought through comparison and contrast. Such, for example, is the sentence: "At a time when Carlyle was declaring *wonder* to be the essence of religion, Newman tersely reminds his readers that 'Wonder is not religion, or we should be worshipping our railroads'" (p. 172). Such is the passing reference linking Newman's "steadfast adherence to supernatural reality" with the ebbing of the secularized social Gospel and the coming into their own of "such radically non-immanentist religious thinkers as Kierkegaard and Karl Barth" (p. 357). Such illustrations could be multiplied many times.

Anyone who has attempted a close study of Newman, and especially the college or university teacher who has felt the need for a scholarly and systematic treatment of Newman's work, will welcome this book with gratitude, and with admiration for the manner in which Professor Harrold has performed an arduous task.

ALVAN S. RYAN

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THIS ANTHOLOGY OF WAR POETRY, prepared by Messrs. Rodman and Eberhart, is selective rather than exhaustive. It is organized according to a chronological scheme and includes lyrical echoes of "battles long ago" from Homer to twenty-one-year-old Airman Gervase Stewart, who died in action in 1941. The editors are jointly responsible for the bulk of the selections; a few are the result of their individual

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The Index to AMERICA for Volume 73 (from
April 7, 1945, to September 29, 1945) is now
ready for distribution. It will be mailed to sub-
scribers who have already requested it or to other
subscribers sending a request. Address America
Press, 70 East 45th St., New York 17, N. Y.

judgments. They both contribute separate critical introduc-
tions; and here Master Sergeant Rodman reveals himself a
keener critic than Lieutenant Commander Eberhart. It is a
good thing for our souls to have a book of this sort so close
on the heels of a hideous fratricidal war. Generals are prone
to forget, and propagandists dare not remember what the
poets never lose sight of: that, as Whitman has it in his
beautiful *Reconciliation*, my dead enemy is "a man divine as
myself."

One realizes, as the centuries wheel past with a flip of the
pages, that modern literature, whatever its deficiencies, has
one sadly definite superiority: the closer we approach to our
own age the better the poetry becomes, even as the wars
grow more horrible. The invariable exception must be made
for some of the old Germanic heroic material and, above all,
for Homer's "pity of war," which comes to us through the
magnificent new renditions of Lieutenant Richmond Latti-
more, for whom, in a departmental spasm of unconscious
irony, the Navy Department has disclaimed any responsi-
bility, lest perchance Achilles' terrible confession to Lycaon
of how he became inured to slaughter be somehow construed
as subversive.

The compilation is healthily untinged by ideological con-
siderations; its scope is catholic enough to admit as com-
rades in the same barracks Stefan George's incipient Fasc-
ism, Guillaume Apollinaire's nihilism, George Barker's paci-
fism, Ilya Ehrenburg's Messianic Revolutionism, Thomas
Hardy's rabbit's-eye view of Waterloo, Ezra Pound's and
e. e. cummings' disillusion, and Louis MacNeice's elegiac
unillthun. That celebrated unknown warrior of the poetic
rank and file, Anon., receives due honors; especially a peg-
legged trooper with a randy leer, the Irish folk-song, *Johnny,
I Hardly Knew Ye*. But Kipling's bunk is unfairly scant;
and where are John Pudney, Archibald MacLeish, the Ches-
terton of *Lepanto* and the *White Horse*, the Noyes of *Victo-
ry Ball*?

The selections for the first three sections are sensitively
made and the material surprisingly unhackneyed; but the
experienced reader will probably relish the "darker penetra-
tion" of this war's poets even more. Excellent as was the
work of Owen and Sassoon for 1914-1918, their character-
istic note rang a little shrill because keyed to the anguish of
an outraged humanism. One feels a greater centralness in the
poetry of this war; it has become cosmic, even religious,
although Sgt. Rodman hedges on this latter point when he
remarks *à la* Henry James: "To call it religious would be
imprecise, but not entirely misleading." The mournful woe
of World War I weaves itself anew in the death of young
poets like Alun Lewis, Timothy Corsellis, Gervase Stewart.
Of the survivors, Harry Brown and Karl Shapiro are out-
standing. Brown's *The Drill* arrests a marching platoon for
one bronze moment of timeless attitude. Shapiro's *Elegy for
a Dead Soldier* advances even farther into the universal; his
is definitely a talent to be watched, displaying as it does a
religious awareness unparalleled in American verse since Eliot.

CHARLES A. BRADY

SYSTEMATIC POLITICS. By Charles E. Merriam. Univer-
sity of Chicago Press. \$3.75

THE ADVANTAGE of this comprehensive volume is that
it attacks practically every problem of political organiza-
tion. Professor Merriam analyzes the roots, ends, tools and
organs of government in their sociological, psychological,
economic and political phases. He discusses types of rule,
formal and informal government, the central problem (so
well appreciated in *The Federalist*) of balancing stability
and change, and the interrelations of political associations,
that is, international order.

Merriam brings to this synthesis the specialized knowledge of an authority on citizenship, political parties, political theory and the relationship of what he has called "private government" (e.g., of corporations and trade-unions and religious and other bodies) to "public government." He has had practical experience in national political agencies of an advisory character as well as in the municipal government of Chicago as alderman and candidate for the office of mayor. Not the least of the virtues of this volume is the generous citation of bibliographical material in the footnotes.

In general, he tries to take a very balanced view. He appreciates fully the sociological bases of politics. His discussion of the vexed question of sovereignty is quite good.

Yet the volume lacks philosophical anchorage and gives unmistakable signs of confused thinking for want of a clear-cut knowledge of basic principles regarding the nature of man. This would not be so bad if Merriam were writing a purely empirical description of political systems (if that is possible). But he seems to be attempting more than that. The author would like to provide answers to very fundamental questions. He seems to lack the equipment for the task.

For example, his handling of the topic of "rational consent" bespeaks an inability to grasp the philosophical issues. One can find in Hamilton, as in Suarez and his predecessors, a consistent line of reasoning on this topic. All men are specifically equal. Yet they have a natural need to combine in political society. But because of their equality, no reason can be assigned in human nature why one man should claim the right to exercise political authority over his fellows except through their consent. This is simple enough, isn't it? It is a well established tradition in political philosophy, isn't it? It makes sense out of universal manhood suffrage, political parties, and the role of public opinion, doesn't it? Then why attempt to make an *ersatz* fuel for the running of the vehicle of popular government out of the watery materials of anthropological, sociological and socio-psychological data? This is what Merriam tries to do, and it explains the basic weakness of *Systematic Politics*, the absence of any satisfactory principle of systematization.

ROBERT C. HARTNETT

A. J. PILIÉ, S.J., is pursuing his theological studies at Saint Mary's College, St. Marys, Kansas.

DAVE PRUDHOMME, former Lieutenant, jg., U.S.N.R., is back at his home in Portland, Oregon.

REV. JOSEPH B. CODE, former Professor at the Catholic University of America, was appointed head of the Religion Department of the University of Iowa a few years ago, and later resigned to become Director of the Inter-American Institute. He is the author of *Great American Foundresses*.

JOHN CARSON is Director of the Washington Office of the Cooperative League.

SISTER MARY DAVID, S.S.N.D., of the College of Notre Dame of Maryland, has published much of Claudel in translation.

FRANCES E. ROLLINS writes from Detroit, where she has been doing research in the *Jesuit Relations*.

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THE FRENCH TOUCH. For some strange reason the word farce seems to have fallen into disrepute in theatrical parlance. The word has become practically extinct in theatrical advertisements and advance publicity, and never appears in reviews unless the reviewer is looking for a nasty and insulting adjective to describe a production that displeases him.

Farce used to be a respectable and popular form of entertainment. It was a frankly absurd comedy written for no other purpose than to allow the audience a delightful lapse into nonsense. It was never taken seriously, by either author or audience, except that the former hoped it would be a monetary success.

While farce was frivolous in intention and shallow in substance, it required expert productive skills. The author had to be clever enough to make the impossible seem plausible, and actors had to affect seriousness in ludicrous situations.

Farce, as a word, has all but disappeared from our current theatrical vocabulary, but farce, as a dramatic form, persists on the stage. *The French Touch*, for instance, is what we used to call a farce. It is not first-rate farce, even if one overlooks its moral blind side, but its dialog is frequently diverting and its situations are often humorous.

The scene of the story is Paris during the German occupation, and the leading character is a French author-actor-producer starving in his dark theater. He is approached by the resident German minister of culture with a proposition to reopen his theatre with a play advocating Nazi-Vichy collaboration. Bribed with food, fuel and money, he consents, but secretly writes two endings for the play. The script submitted to the minister of culture supports collaboration, while the ending he intends to present on the opening night is a defiance of the occupation.

That the play might have a surprise ending is the one thing the minister of culture does not suspect. Otherwise, with usual German thoroughness, he does everything imaginable to make the production a success, even keeping the cast under guard during rehearsals and in jail overnight. The Germans are like that. The most thorough people on earth, they often overlook some small but important detail. They provide their armies with magnificent equipment, from fearsome weapons down to uniforms with two pairs of trousers, and the trousers have two sets of buttons. But they forget suspenders, and in the clutch they are caught with their pants down, and lose the war.

The story offers numerous opportunities for fun, but the authors, Joseph Fields and Jerome Chodorov, muff most of their chances, preferring to emphasize the sex theme. Their leading character is a much-married(?) man, and the minister of culture sees to it that all his three wives have parts in the production. Too much of the comedy depends on whether he will sleep with his original or current wife.

Brian Aherne, featured as the patriotic producer, has a difficult role. His part calls for playing a ham without being hammy, and he makes a good job of it. He has to, for John Wengraf and Arlene Francis, as the minister of culture and the producer's first wife, almost steal the show.

The production, presented in The Cort by Herbert H. Harris, was directed by René Clair. George Jenkins designed the sets.

THE MERMAIDS SINGING. By John van Druten, who directed. Produced by Alfred de Liagre in The Empire. Occasion of sin in three acts. THEOPHILUS LEWIS

FILMS

THE HARVEY GIRLS. This time the conquest of the West is told to music and much dazzling Technicolor. Just in case anyone does not know who the Harvey girls were, a detailed foreword identifies them as "the winsome waitresses who aided Fred Harvey in pushing his chain of restaurants along the lengthening tracks of the Santa Fe—then conquered the West, not with powder, bow and rifle, but with a beefsteak and a cup of coffee." The stories of these pretty misses are told with plenty of action (rough and tumble some of the time), with tuneful songs as a frequent accompaniment, and with romance bustin' out all over the place. 'Way back in 1890, we are introduced to Judy Garland, who is en route to Sandrock, a lawless pioneer place in New Mexico, where she intends to marry a cowboy who proposed to her through a matrimonial agency. Arriving at her destination, she meets the groom-to-be and learns that his courtship was a fake, that the owner of the local saloon (John Hodiak), a fellow with a bit of poetry in his soul that belies a hard exterior, is the real author. Our heroine thereupon calls off the wedding and gets a job as a Harvey girl. Needless to say, this frontier town has a whole line-up of lawless inhabitants and they do their best to run the law-abiding ones out of the place, though the saloon-keeper, having fallen for the mail-order bride, insists on a fair fight. So the finale finds the shady ladies of the Alhambra departing from Sandrock, and the villains subdued, while the members of the Harvey staff carry on. Meanwhile, of course, the heroine and hero clear up all their previous misunderstandings. Every bit of this is played as broad melodrama, with fist-fights, a rip-roaring fire sequence and some comic numbers contributed by Virginia O'Brien. Judy Garland as the rather wistful heroine sings several songs, giving special attention to the very familiar *On the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe*. Ray Bolger dances a couple of times, while Kenny Baker has a brief chance to sing. Angela Lansbury, Preston Foster, Marjorie Main and Chill Wills take a big part in the hectic proceedings. Costumes and sets of the '90s are lavish and colorful. *Adults* will find this an eye-filling, action-packed piece of make-believe. (MGM)

APPOINTMENT IN TOKYO. The horrors and the glories of the war in the Pacific come home to us in this documentary record, produced by the Army Pictorial Service in cooperation with the Army Air Forces and the U. S. Navy. Covering the full span of our Pacific operations, the offering starts with the siege of Corregidor, General Wainwright's surrender in the Philippines and finishes with the Japanese surrender ceremonies on the battleship *Missouri*, in Tokyo Bay. In addition to the graphic pictures, there are illuminating animated maps and a most explicit narration. The film is a fine tribute to the courage of the combat cameramen who photographed it. *Everyone* should see this memorable saga. (Warner Brothers-Army Signal Corps-WAC)

SHE WOULDN'T SAY YES. It is rather sad to see Rosalind Russell's fine talents for comedy wasted on a bit of trash like this. Now, psychiatry is in for a ribbing and Miss Russell is the psychoanalyst who takes the hurdles for laughs. Cast as a feminine physician, she refuses to let love intrude upon her work, until an Army officer (Lee Bowman) decides to change her mind and a ridiculous romance ensues. Neither the story nor the comedy is worth a whit of your time and it must be rated as *objectionable* for it indulges in a light treatment of marriage, as well as suggestive remarks and situations. (United Artists) MARY SHERIDAN

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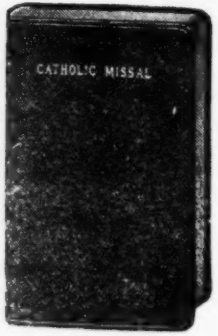

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PARADE

RECENT DISPATCHES disclosed that a few soldiers in France were stricken with blindness after imbibing moonshine liquor. . . . Other dispatches, speaking not of a few but of millions of people, indicated that vast segments of the population of two great nations had been stricken with spiritual blindness as a result of imbibing moonshine philosophies of life. . . . Under a newspaper headline reading: "Says Marriage Getting to be Joke in Britain," an Anglican prelate is quoted thus: "There is a widespread drift in Britain away from the Christian conception of marriage. Marriage no longer is regarded by the nation as a whole as either a sacrament or a holy estate but as a contract which can be broken fairly easily by mutual consent." . . . Over American wires poured dispatches indicating that also in the United States marriage has become pretty much of a joke. . . . In the East a woman took her fifth husband. Reporters interviewing the fifth bridegroom inquired: "Have you met any of the bride's former husbands?" Replied Number Five: "Yes, some of them." "How many?" "Well, let's just say 'some.'" . . . An eighty-six-year-old Los Angeles husband walked off with a divorce after testifying: "My wife is around seventy, but she got interested in a younger man." . . . In Kentucky, a wife petitioned for divorce, complaining that her husband insisted on getting the dinner ready and doing most of the housework. The judge, after admonishing husbands in general not to be too helpful around the house, declared: "I took this divorce petition home and read it to my wife. I told her I feared I was doing too much work around home and begged assurance she wouldn't divorce me." . . . In Chicago, a husband, after frequently threatening his wife he would go home to his mother, finally did so. The wife divorced him. . . . Here and there a few judges tried to halt the pagan avalanche of splitting homes. . . . In the East, not long after a young couple plighted their troth, a chandelier fell on the bride, injuring her spine and making her an invalid. For several years the husband remained devoted but eventually fell in love with another woman and asked a court to free him. The judge refused, stating: "The wife is in a sad plight. She has no one on whom to lean for strength and guidance other than her husband, to whom in full vigor of young womanhood she plighted her troth. Sickness and misfortune are common to mankind and must be borne with courage and resignation." . . . One section of the population, a very important one, is adamant against divorce. If the children of shattered homes had the authority, they would abolish it. . . . In Los Angeles, two young products of a split-up home, a seventeen-year-old girl, a fifteen-year-old boy, sued their father's new wife for stealing him from their mother "by guile, artifice and design, thus depriving the plaintiffs of their father's support, care and the enjoyment of a normal home to which children of their age are lawfully entitled." . . . Children, however, do not have the final word. During the first ten months of this year, in thirty of the nation's largest cities there were almost half as many divorce suits as there were marriages. . . . In Franklin County, Ohio, there were 253 more divorce suits than marriage licenses.

The family springs from nature itself. It is governed by laws rooted in nature. . . . Shipbuilders cannot treat the laws of buoyancy as a joke, to be violated for slight or even grave reasons. . . . Engineers cannot take a jocular attitude toward the laws of stress and strain. . . . Doctors cannot become facetious about cancer. . . . And neither can human society take a nonchalant attitude toward the social cancer, divorce.

JOHN A. TOOMEY

CORRESPONDENCE

WHITHER EDUCATION?

EDITOR: Shortly after reading the letter of "Teacher" in *AMERICA* of December 8 concerning the relevance of the idea of God to American education, I observed that Representative Clare Boothe Luce had introduced a House joint resolution asking "that the Congress hereby reaffirm the faith of the founding fathers to the people of the United States . . . namely: That the inalienable rights of man, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and his birth in equality, are the endowments, not of governments or men, but of the Creator."

This timely resolution reminds me of a question proposed recently to an official of a municipal Board of Education:

"Is there in the By-laws or other official regulations of the public-school system authorization for teaching, as the basis of democracy, the following words (and their implications) from the Declaration of Independence:

"All men are created equal; they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights."

"Implications: man is a creature; there is a Creator; human rights are inalienable because they have their source in the Creator; no other power, not even the state, can nullify these rights since it is not the source of these rights."

If our multi-billion-dollar system of American public education is not training our youth for American democracy cognizant of the one stable foundation of its rights, for what is it training our youth? Statism?

To adapt somewhat the words of Washington in his *Farewell Address*, "Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life itself, if the sense of religious right and religious obligation desert our democracy?"

New York, N. Y.

BENJAMIN T. CRAWFORD

PURPOSE OF LITURGICAL MOVEMENT

EDITOR: It was a pleasure to read Ensign Joseph T. Nolan's courageous article, *It Is God We Are Praising*, in your November 10 issue.

Despite the high quality of Ensign Nolan's article, it should be pointed out that his definition of the objectives of the liturgical movement failed to include a vital element, perhaps intentionally so. It would have us pray together. Ensign Nolan should have added that it would have us live together—and live together as Christians!

While it may be assumed that praying together well will result, as a matter of course, in living together well, advocates of liturgical reform should never take the latter for granted and allow it to remain an assumption to be made by their readers. It should be expressed and emphasized at every opportunity. Failure to do so always places the liturgical movement in danger of becoming, to use Father Reinhold's words, "one of those romantic historicisms or esthetic toys of sensitive and tired intellectuals."

It is true that the liturgical movement in America does not suffer from this weakness, but it is also true that many Catholics, clergy and lay leaders, are disinterested bystanders, or even opponents of the liturgical movement, simply because they do look upon the movement as the "esthetic toy of sensitive and tired intellectuals" and, therefore, a weapon which is of no value in the fight against the secu-

larism which flourishes among Catholics. Such opponents—and they are a major obstacle to the general acceptance of the liturgical movement—might be won over if they could be convinced that the secularism against which they are fighting can be conquered only by a liturgical revival in the fullest sense.

Milwaukee, Wis.

ADRIAN P. WINKEL

A BUILDER PROTESTS

EDITOR: Father Parsons (*AMERICA*, Dec. 2) advocates government home building for the poorer classes. May I disagree and ask your help? This question is vital right now; and many accept opinions appearing in *AMERICA* without further study. The fight against inflation is tough—and will be tougher. Any houses built by the Government will be expensive and tend very strongly toward that very thing—inflation. If government-built houses are more expensive, as they admittedly are, it does not make sense to build them for poorer people! The ultimate user must pay all costs; he cannot escape even by paying low rents. His every article of food carries taxes and his immediate gain, by low rent, is much more than made up by these taxes. The only way government agencies can pay at all is by taxing us one way or another.

Building is now at a standstill because: 1) every agency of government obstructs private building and 2) loafing has become a fine art among most union labor. Both appear to believe that permanent economy can be built only by the social agencies created by Government. In many ways, *AMERICA* seems to share that belief. Whatever the theory, it will work out only under very limited circumstances; it is wrong in practice.

Right here in Seattle a small group of us are ready to build as soon as we can get materials. Our first unit will include thirty-four five-room houses. Each will have approximately 1,000 square feet—all hardwood floors, modern built-ins in kitchen and bath, full basement, air-conditioning furnace and a lot sixty feet by one hundred. Houses are connected with sewer, have sidewalks, graded streets, and are on city transportation. The cost will be less than five thousand dollars. I challenge any governmental agency to compete with us—on equal terms!

Mr. Editor, this is not just idle talk; we are practical builders, have been at building many years. We want to go ahead, but you and other people have gone off on a wild idea of social economy that will wreck us. That is not important, but you will wreck our whole manner of living, if you succeed.

Seattle, Wash.

AUSTIN CASEY

(The projected houses referred to by the writer of the letter, while reasonably priced for their class, seem somewhat above the amount which can safely be paid by middle-income families. They are clearly beyond the reach of low-income families for which public housing, or government-subsidized housing, is built. There is then no competition nor interference. It is, moreover, not quite correct to say that the very-low-income families who benefit by government-subsidized housing are paying the equivalent amount in taxes. Through taxation the Government's share in the cost of such housing is distributed among all the people. EDITOR.)

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ONLY ONE MAN ever deliberately chose life. The rest of us are born into life through no willing of our own. He alone willed to be born into the world. He chose His own mother and His foster-father and the time of His birth. He chose the way of His life and the pattern of His living. All that He chose is good. It must be, for it is Divinely chosen.

Human life itself must be good, or He whose birthday we celebrate on Christmas Day would not have chosen it for His own. It must be worth the living or He would not have willed to live it. Human life must be capable of great happiness and joy, or He, whose very existence is joy, could not have united Himself so intimately with it. Human beings must be good or at least capable of great good, or He who is Goodness could not have made Himself one of us.

We have just gone through a truly horrible period in the history of our world. For six years human life has been cheap, and human happiness of little importance. The whole world has been organized to kill and destroy with a marshaling of genius, a unified enthusiasm, an heroic spirit of sacrifice that has never been applied to construction and to happy living. In many parts of the world human nature has reached depths of savagery almost unbelievable. The suffering and misery of undeserving millions, the snuffing out of so many young lives, bright with promise, dear with love, have made us wonder if after all life is worth the living. Fear of even greater agonies that may be yet to come make us ask ourselves if after all human life was made only for destruction.

This Christmas of 1945 is the first Christmas in six years that sees the world, if not at peace, at least groping its way to peace. With the peace, unfortunately, has come what may be called the paralysis of peace, the pessimism of peace, even the selfishness of peace. War was all action. War was the acceptance of any sacrifice and any suffering in the interests of victory. War was unity for destruction. With peace the fever dies—and with the fever may die the enthusiasm, the striving, the sacrificing for the goal.

At the Crib this Christmas we must learn first of all a new confidence in the goodness of life, in the goodness of man, in the happiness for which man was born. We must learn all over again that every child is wonderful who is born in the image of the Child in the Manger, that every mother is holy and every mother's life noble that brings into the world another to live the life of the Christ whom Mary bore, that every worker, every father, every man has a dignity like unto Joseph's. We must learn all over again that somehow, somewhere, deep in all human beings is at least a dim reflection of the infinitely appealing, infinitely heroic, infinitely lovable goodness of the Child of Bethlehem. Learning all that, we are truly on the road to peace.

"He came unto His own. . . . As many as received Him He gave the power to become the sons of God." That is the gift and the goal the Child in the Manger gives us, a gift to be shared with Him, a goal to be reached with Him. The worthwhileness, even the hard worthwhileness of His earthly life He offers us, and His companionship and His closeness through life. In the Secret of this morning's first Mass we ask for all that, "through this holy interchange of gifts may we be found like unto Him, who has united our human nature with Divinity." Likeness to Him, that is goodness. Union with Him in life, that is wisdom and joy and holy living. Union with Him in death and after death, that is the success and the crown of holy living, that "we who have known the mysteries of His light on earth may also enjoy His happiness in Heaven."

JOHN P. DELANEY

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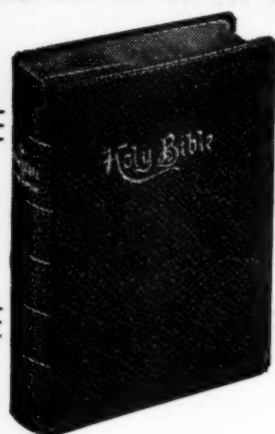
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